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A Critical Analysis of the Church Viewed as Struggling within the Continuum of Matriarchal-Patriarchal Principles

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CHURCH VIEWED AS
STRUGGLING WITHIN THE CONTINUUM OF
MATRIARCHAL-PATRIARCHAL PRINCIPLES

By

ROBERT C. ALEXANDER

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Reasons for the Study	
	The Design for the Study	
	Guidelines for the Study	
II.	A PROFILE OF THE PAW PAW CHURCH	13
	Early History of the Paw Paw Church	
	The Paw Paw Church Today	
	A Problem in the Beloved Community	
III.	THEORETICAL PRESENTATIONS	27
	The Oedipus Myth and Personality	
	Development	
	Anticipations of the Oedipus Myth in	
	the Holy Bible	
	The Sociology of the Rural Church	
IV.	THE PAW PAW CHURCH IN THE LIGHT OF THE	
	OEDIPUS MODEL	47
	The Church as a Family	
	The Church as a Personality	
	Implications of the Thesis	
	APPENDIX	76
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	119

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart		Page
1.	Descriptive Roster of Church People Mentioned in this Paper	12
2.	Matriarchal-Patriarchal Principles	30

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Reasons for the Study

Every problem-situation is part of growth, and if we can inquire into the predicament or problem sufficiently, we can expect our earlier frustrations to give way to a realistic and tangible optimism in which we can conclude that any movement in the life of the person (or group) is always directed towards health. Thus, the fever or festering sore is the body's attempt to maintain health. Thus too, the argument or wrangle, the outspoken disagreement within a group such as the church can be viewed--not with alarm and pained disappointment at non-Christian attitudes, but rather as a part of the process of spiritual growth occurring in the "beloved community, the Church."

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" declared Jesus of Nazareth.¹ Our Lord has called attention here to the divine element present in every human assembly, especially that assembly, the congregation of God's people. In other words, Jesus' life and teachings speak directly to the polarity of the divine-human elements within the psyche. This polar tension may be

¹Matt. 18:20.

seen as the constant struggle of the psyche to maintain equilibrium.

Man today cannot escape the impress of society upon his every move. He has before him two choices: (1) the human choice of being in and of this world, or (2) the divine choice of being in, but not of this world. He has the choice of conforming to society's approved patterns of dress, custom and habit, or seeking to become a distinct individual, freed from the pressure to conform to the wish and will of those about him.

The task of the Church is similar to that of the individual in that she too is enjoined to "Be not conformed to this world," but transformed in purpose, effort and attitude.

The Christian faith confronts each person with the possibility of having one world while living in another world. The Christian minister finds that the individuals within the church are not all alike nor are they all in harmonious agreement as to the basic values of life. Some are conforming to society's demands, some are asserting themselves as non-conformists, while others are asserting themselves more positively by seeking to become more fully themselves as followers of Christ.

Viewed psychologically, perhaps it would be fairly accurate to say that the minister serves: (1) the Dependent-submissive who may be seen as those who do not want to struggle with the divine-human tension, who want to be released from decision, from the possibility of error and so from judgment;

(2) the Rebel, or non-conformist for whom this tension is an anathema, a curse, who struggles to deny one end or the other of the divine-human polarity--either all-out secular or systematically caught up in a religion that rebels against the flesh; and (3) the Disciples of our Lord who are seen to be those who have found a balance in the divine-human elements of their lives, who have come to accept the limitations of their humanity and the limitless elements of the divine or spiritual motive in their lives.

The minister soon finds that the Church is kaleidoscopic in its nature. At one time it may be the quiet congregation of individuals seeking God's will. Again, it may be the crowd demanding to be led, pleading to be directed, to be told what to do. It may even become a crowd crying: "Hosanna to the one who comes in the Name of the Lord." The minister may also find that the Beloved Community can become the angry crowd ready to depose and crucify the leader who does not lead them where "they" want to be led. This suggests that at times the church congregation becomes a crowd bent on its own purpose. Elias Canetti writes of the crowd:

The most important occurrence within the crowd is the discharge. Before this the crowd does not actually exist; it is the discharge which creates it. This is the moment when all who belong to the crowd get rid of their differences and feel equal.²

While the minister may often find himself in the Wilderness of Temptation or in the Garden of Gethsemane confronted with his own human frailties, he will nevertheless find that

²Elias Canetti, Crowds and Power (New York: The Viking Press, 1962), p. 17.

the frailties of his people cannot be overlooked, and may become the grist for his mill as he seeks to understand and cope with the problems of the human family in the life of his people.

While sin is generally defined as that action or attitude that separates man from God, it is my desire in writing this paper that the minister might come to look upon the element of sin in the individual members of his flock as a reflection of their position and direction in family relationships, and also as a part of their spiritual movement towards health.

The concept of sin as employed here is a one-word description of the individual's response to life experiences as he seeks for self-fulfillment and spiritual awareness. This means that the person who anesthetizes himself with drink is protesting against an intolerable awareness of an experience and for full spiritual awareness of his real self. This suggests that man is continually seeking a larger concept of God as the LORD or guiding principle of his life. The question arises here as to where he gets this concept. Both the Christian Church and modern-day psychology point to man's childhood and his view of his parents. God is like a father; like a good mother. And the child finds out also that God is like his teachers, and later like his boss, the foreman, and other authorities in his life. He looks forward hopefully to an authority that will portray a Christlike concept of God.

Each of these smaller gods he must gradually relinquish. Each has caused him to be conscious of his limitations and

weaknesses, his failures and his gross and minor sins. But his suffering and anguish is not over the sins and errors only, but may be perceived to be the growing pains of spiritual progress leading towards rebirth as he seeks to cope with his experiences and maintains a posture of honoring (obedience and reverence) his parents and parent-figures. But he knows that it is not enough to be obedient and reverent towards his parents and parent-figures for he too, will be a parent, and he must be able to treat his children with the freedom and equality his Mother showered upon him as a child. He must be able to see adults fraternally as grown-up brothers and sisters, no longer as necessary authorities. And this is the struggle which must be resolved in order that he might be a productive and fulfilled person.

The aim of this study then is to view the church both as a dynamic community of individuals seeking to realize their larger selves and also to see the church as a community-entity with other group-entities surrounding it forming the larger community freed of many burdensome destructions as:

Only together can men free themselves from their burdens of distance; and this, precisely, is what happens in a crowd. During the discharge distinctions are thrown off and all feel equal. . . . But the moment of discharge, so desired and so happy, contains its own danger. It is based on an illusion; the people who suddenly feel equal have not really become equal; nor will they feel equal forever. They return to their separate houses, they lie down on their own beds, they keep their possessions and their names. They do not cast out their relations nor run away from their families.³

³Ibid., p. 18.

It is hoped that the insights derived from this study will not only tend to make the life of the church more transparently understandable, but also enable the pastor and church leaders to see their task with increased objectivity and patience, thus promoting a deeper appreciation of the spiritual needs of the people who make up the "beloved community," Christ's church.

The prime stimulus for this study has come from the experience of serving as a temporary supply pastor to a rural church of 41 members. As a pastor here, I have noted that the Sacrament of Holy Communion is not regarded as a rite that binds the people into one fellowship. They regarded it with reverence, but attendance was always smaller than on other Sundays.

Recalling that Robertson Smith (Religion of the Semites)⁴ conceived of the primeval family establishing a prototype of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and that Freud developed this account in his book, Totem and Taboo, it struck me that the Sacrament here was distorted, that it was being subverted to serve the human side of the psyche. Freud and Robertson Smith seemed to say something more. In the account of the primeval family the brothers, after killing the father, confess one to the other the enormity of their crime, its purpose being to take the father's wives and daughters as their own wives. To prevent such a crime from ever happening again they set up a sort of day of atonement in which they

⁴Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo, trans. James Strachey. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1952), pp. 133-135.

sacrifice a "totem animal" (representing the father) and begin to indoctrinate their families, teaching them the two great taboos, murder of one's parents and incest. In the sacrifice of this totem animal everyone participates especially in the eating of its flesh after the sacrifice. Thus they both acknowledge their guilt, and profess obedience and reverence to the father (or parents) for all time. Originally the totem meal was a sacrament to guard against incest primarily, and against murder secondarily.⁵ A distortion of the Lord's Supper might in reality point towards the church as being incestuous in its attempt to find itself spiritually.

In applying this to the Paw Paw Church people it struck me as significant that these people while reverencing the rite did not want to enter into it. This seemed to give some sort of index into the depth of their own spiritual life.

The myth of Oedipus Rex so closely parallels the myth of the primeval family, that I began to study Freud's theory of the Oedipus Complex, and to inquire into the possibility of using the Oedipus model as Freud developed it in order to gain further insights into the beloved family, the Church.

In Freud's theory of the Oedipus Complex he develops the theme to show how the personality grows in the early formative years from birth to about age seven.⁶ His theory was one which progressively reduced everything to the rudimentary drives of the pleasure principle. Somehow the insights

⁵Ibid., pp. 141-143.

⁶Patrick Mullahy, Oedipus, Myth and Complex (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1948), pp. 25-64.

did not come clear enough. I read Patrick Mullahy's survey on what various analysts were saying about the Oedipus myth. Several of these analysts, Adler, Jung, Horney, and Sullivan dealt with Freud's interpretation and modified from there.

Erich Fromm did something unique.⁷ He studied not only the myth of Oedipus Rex, but also Oedipus at Colonus and Antigone, seeing in them a trilogy. The view he finally formulated was that the Oedipus myth represents the child in a struggle between principles enunciated by his mother (matriarchal) and those later espoused by his father (patriarchal principles).

Fromm's description of the Oedipus myth with its Matriarchal-Patriarchal continuum of principles operating in the early life of the child seemed to me to offer a suitable model by which to study the daily life of the church, especially the clustering of relationships about a particular incident, and arrive at a fairly well-articulated understanding of its dynamics.

If the church were to be viewed as a family,⁸ then it would be quite possible that the unresolved childhood fears, anxieties and wishes would come to the surface from time to time. There would certainly be attachments to Mother by some and attachments to Father by others. This would suggest that some people emanated the Matriarchal Principles, while others

⁷Erich Fromm, The Forgotten Language (New York and Toronto: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1951), pp. 204-205.

⁸Small Groups, ed. A. Paul Hare, Edgar F. Borgatta, and Robert F. Bales (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 15.

the Patriarchal. Still others would manifest a happy blend of this continuum of principles.

Inasmuch as the Oedipus Myth is so operative both in the family as well as in Oedipus himself, this study of the church will be one of viewing the church both as a family group and as an entity (or individual) in a community of group-entities.

The Design for the Study

The Thesis

It is the thesis of this paper that the Church possesses traits which are characteristic of the human personality; therefore, her spiritual movement can be understood and dealt with through the insights of the Oedipus Complex Theory initially described by Sigmund Freud in his discussion of personality development, and greatly elaborated upon by Erich Fromm in his book, The Forgotten Language.

Supporting Hypotheses

1. The Church in her daily life and movement may be viewed as possessing an inter-relationship like that of a family.

a. In a specific situation the inter-action can be expected to involve those in the congregation, teenagers and adults, who serve as parent-figures, and also those who respond as children or sibling-figures.

2. The Church takes on a sense of individuality in which she manifests herself as a personality at a particular stage of growth or maturity, and can be not only viewed, but also treated or related to as a personality.

a. Seen in this light, the Church may be viewed as a group-entity in a community of group-entities.

Basic Assumptions

1. The Oedipus Complex, while resolved with a degree of maturity for each person, is continually operative and in process of further resolution in his immediate relationships. This suggests that the church body is to be viewed dynamically as in a state of tension and operating within the matriarchal-patriarchal continuum.

2. The Acts of Worship together with participation in the corporate services of the church are basically attempts of the congregation to move towards great self-control and maturity, first in their corporate life and then in private life.

Guidelines for the Study

1. This is a study of a particular rural church and also of a cluster of relationships preceding and following an incident which occurred in Sunday School one Sunday shortly after I became the Supply Pastor of the church. Records have been made of some of the conversations I had with individuals who were directly or indirectly involved in the incident. Also recorded are events and situations more tangential, but which add considerably to the broader picture.

2. In order to respect the privacy of individuals, the names of all involved, including the church and surrounding communities, have been changed. (See Page 12.)

3. The purpose of this paper will be to demonstrate the implementation of Oedipus Complex Theory as developed by Erich Fromm and outlined in the Study Design of this paper.

4. The method of demonstration will be in three steps:

- a. Presentation of the situation.
- b. Manifestation of the Oedipus Struggle.
- c. Conclusions on the spiritual health in individuals and/or situations.

5. Observations will be drawn from (1) the history of this Church, (2) Church groups, (3) Incidents and (4) Pastoral visits.

CHART I

DESCRIPTIVE ROSTER OF CHURCH PEOPLE MENTIONED IN THIS PAPER

Name	Teen 15-20	Young Adult 20-25	Middle Age 25-50	Older 50-70	Position Held in the Church
Mr. Roy Ackerman			x		Elder, Trustee
Mr. and Mrs. Anderson			x		No Church Office
Mr. Frank Eberts			x		Trustee
Mrs. Eberts			x		Church Treasurer, Sunday School Teacher
Steve Eberts (Son)	x				Deacon
Mrs. Mack			x	x	1962-Superintendent of Sunday School
Mrs. Mills					Sunday School Teacher, Former Church Treasurer
Mr. Pullen			x		Trustee, 1963-Superintendent of Sunday School
Mrs. Pullen			x		Sunday School Teacher
Mr. Shedd				x	Elder
Mrs. South				x	Elder, Sunday School Teacher, 1965-Superintendent of Sunday School
Mr. John South			x		Trustee, Sunday School Teacher
Mrs. John South			x		Deacon
Reverend Stokes				x	Former Pastor, 1953-1962
Mr. Martin Stone			x		Elder, 1960-61 and 1964-Superintendent of Sunday School
Mrs. Lucy Stone			x		Sunday School Teacher
Miss Mary Travis					Assistant Superintendent of Sunday School
Mrs. S. Vivian	x			x	Public School Teacher-No Church Office
(and two sisters)					
Mr. Tom Williams				x	Elder
Mrs. Tom (Ruby) Williams				x	Sunday School Teacher, 1959-Superintendent of Sunday School

CHAPTER II

A PROFILE OF THE PAW PAW CHURCH

The Early History of the Paw Paw Church

The Paw Paw Church was organized in 1858 with 19 charter members. A perusal of the church's history which was published at the Centennial in 1958 portrays the church determined to exist despite the dire predictions and frank appraisal by its pastors of their spiritual poverty.

The ministers who served were, for the most part, serving on a half-time basis with this church yoked with a church in a nearby community, or the ministers served the church on Sundays giving little or no pastoral visitation. (See Appendix A.)

The Paw Paw Church Today

General Description

The rural community of Paw Paw is situated about 25 miles from three fair-sized Indiana cities. This community once expected a lively growth, but the rail line which was anticipated never came near the community. Over the years this little church, a gas station and a Masonic Lodge hall have served as a harbor for memories of past years when the neighbors used to be more neighborly, when the highway passing

through meant business and fellowship, and when farming was the full-time occupation of the majority of its people.

The Paw Paw Church boasts a congregation of about 40 members. About four of these have moved away, but continue to support it. Almost 20 of the membership are 60 years of age or older.

Attendance at the Worship Service while I have been serving has fluctuated between 10 and 35 people on a particular Sunday morning.

The Sunday School considers its membership to be about 60 children and adults. Its attendance fluctuates less markedly than Church Service and runs about 35 to 45 people each Sunday morning.

The building itself has always looked like an old fashioned wooden schoolhouse. It has a belfry and a bell which at times is rung, but even the ringing of the bell comes as more of a novelty than a custom at this time.

The remarkable feature of the church structure is that there is neither a cross nor a lettered sign to signify its value to the community. Upon further reflection, one reaches a tentative conclusion that this congregation and perhaps the surrounding community are in a quandary of indecision as to whether "to be" Christ's Church or "not to be."

This brief overview of the Paw Paw Church already hints at the ambivalence which Rockwell Smith has noted in his study.⁹

⁹Rockwell C. Smith, People, Land and Churches (New York: Friendship Press, Inc., 1959), pp. 21-39.

Groups, Major and Minor

There are two major groups within this congregation: the Worshipping Group and the Sunday School. The worshipping body consists almost entirely of those who are the adult members of the church. There are about six young people who attend. With one or two exceptions the adult members are quite inarticulate in matters relating to their knowledge of the Bible as well as their understanding of the theology of their faith.

The Sunday School is attended by almost everyone in the church. It possesses the most active program of the church. Christian Education as such is not the concern of the people as might be expected. They accept without criticism or question the doctrinal and moral teachings given them in the conservative Sunday School literature they use.

It can be stated generally that a knowledge of the Bible, the History of the Church, and the tenets of the Christian faith are clearly lacking both in the present program and the past experiences of these people, both young and old.

A minor group in the church is the Ladies Aid. It is composed of mostly older women in the church. Few of the younger women attend. Its primary purpose is not clear, except that it does provide a social outlet for the older women of the church. There is no missionary concern other than that which comes to them through their correspondence with the Regional Women's Association of our church. Due to this, their missionary giving amounts to about \$10.00 per year to a

church hospital in a nearby state. They were asked to provide layettes and hospital materials like this, but because of the time involved and their age they preferred to give \$10.00 as their share.

Outside of their regular monthly meetings, the one contribution of the Ladies Aid is its efforts through church dinners and White Elephant sales to support the financial structure of the church and to provide for material needs of the sanctuary or some other portion of the church building.

Groups: Administrative

The organizational or administrative groups of the church are as follows: The Session, the Deacons, the Trustees, and the temporary Building Committee.

Of these groups the Session is the only one that meets with any regularity and this once a month. This group consists of three elders, whose concern is for the spiritual life of the church. Prior to my coming, the Session was meeting two or three times a year, their Minutes were not properly kept, and their concern was mainly with the temporal affairs of the church and the recording of baptisms, deaths and new members.

Two years ago a sub-committee on Christian Education was established. However, in the months that followed no meetings were held other than two which met initially. As of this year, September 1965, this committee was dissolved. The elders felt that it was expecting too much of the teachers to come out to such meetings. I recommended the dissolution on this basis.

Prior to my coming and during the first two years of my pastoral work here the Deacons never met. They do not meet as a committee but are functioning in certain areas of the church's work such as keeping of records of gifts and memorials, and the Every Member Canvass program. They met once this year.

The Trustees as a standing committee did not meet in any formal way before I came to this church. Since my coming they have met not much more than three or four times. They keep no formal Minutes of their meetings or decisions. When they have met, they admit readily that there is more to their office than they had thought. They and the Deacons have been invited to meet with the Session from time to time. This has not been fruitful, although it does suggest the possibility of instituting a bi-cameral system of government with the Elders and Trustees composing the Session.

The Building Committee has been a pro tem committee and was established two or three years prior to my arrival. The records of this committee are also skimpy. There is good accounting of receipts and expenses, but little or no record of meetings or decisions of any kind.

The Sessions has two to three times asked the Building Committee and the Trustees to make some concerted effort to deplete the current indebtedness, now about \$900.00, through a drive and publicity. No action has followed these requests.

The Nature of the Paw Paw Church, Its
Conflicts and Points of Tension

The congregation, both members and non-members, seem to have one prime value, that of maintaining the church as a family, depending on face to face contact in order to get anything done rather than dealing with the less personal committees. This may imply that there is a need for this familial type relationship, and some inability to be objective in the administration of the church's life.¹⁰

The church officers themselves prefer to defer to the will of the congregation rather than to assert the official decision of their particular committee upon the people. (See Appendix B.) There appears here quite clearly a fear of assertion on the part of an elected committee of officers. This self-emasculation of their proper expression of authority will be commented on further in the chapter on Matriarchal-Patriarchal Principles in Chapter Three, and in Chapter Four--Matriarchal-Patriarchal Tensions. The underlying need of the people to be "one big happy family" which has impelled them towards avoidance of formal structure in the administering of the work of the Sunday School seems to have been a casual factor in contributing to the resulting division. The lack of teachers' meetings and records of important decisions have forced the superintendent to bear the burden of decision-making in crucial areas.

¹⁰T. Lynn Smith, The Sociology of Rural Life, 3d ed.; (New York: Harper and Bros., 1953), p. 471.
Dwight Sanderson, Rural Sociology and Rural Social Organization (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1942), p. 316.

The primary goal of the church congregation is perceived, largely by inference, to be that of retaining an independence from the larger body of the church on a regional and national level. Along with this independence is the fact that their own mores or social bias seems to appear as a veneer of Christian ethics.

The morality issue with reference to the drinking of alcoholic beverages came up with the question from the young people in the Communicants Class, "Is drinking a sin?" The answer of "No, drinking in itself is not a sin, but rather the misuse of such beverages by over-indulgence is a sin," resulted in my being informed that "this Church" taught that drinking in itself was a sin.

There are few open or conscious spiritual conflicts apparent within the congregation where theology is concerned. They accept a fairly conservative, though not fundamentalistic, interpretation of the Christian faith.

The points of tension arise in the areas of authority, morality, and personal prejudices. On the matter of authority and morality, tension erupted in Sunday School when the former superintendent of Sunday School sought to impress her views upon the Sunday School youth and adults, and was politely but firmly resisted by the immediate past superintendent and the newly elected one. (See Appendices C, also D, E, and F.) It was this incident that prompted this study, and will be dealt with in more detail in the next section.

A Problem in the Beloved Community

The Chronology of Events

I began serving the Paw Paw Church as a Supply Pastor on alternate Sundays in January 1962. As a result of Session action, followed by action of the congregation at its annual meeting in January 1962, it was agreed that the pastor should conduct Sunday morning worship services every Sunday instead of alternate Sunday evenings as had been the case with the previous pastor who also served another church. New church officers were elected. Also a new Sunday School Superintendent was elected, a Mrs. Mack. She is a young mother of about 35 years, active though not a member of the church.

In February a business meeting was held by the Sunday School teachers, officers and members during the Sunday School hour. (See Appendix C.) At this time they discussed the matter of procedure for recording attendances for Honor Pin Awards. I was not present at this meeting.

Mrs. Williams expressed the view that whenever any of the young people attended Sunday School at another church instead of at Paw Paw, he or she should secure a note from the minister or teacher in that church indicating his attendance there on a particular Sunday, and he would receive credit towards winning an Honor Roll Award Pin.

The young man, Mr. Stone, who had just retired as superintendent, expressed the view that one had to trust the young people, and stated that he had already committed himself to them while he was in office that "no such note was

necessary." The young people listening to this argument laughed at Mrs. Williams because of her dramatics. She was deeply hurt, as was her husband.

It was in March, the following month, that Mrs. Williams sent me a letter in which she made a rather undefined statement of her dissatisfaction with the way the Sunday School was being run. (See Appendix C.) She said it was going to be necessary for her to quit teaching her class of teen-agers (ages 13-21) because of this. She did not ask for an answer and none was given her by me. It was shortly after this that I heard that she had quit her class.

During April one of the older members in the parish died and I had the funeral service. Mr. Williams offered to drive me to the cemetery. Enroute he spoke of his wife and seemed worried about her because she was upset and took things too personally. Death was the subject that prompted his conversation though he did not talk about death with reference to her. At this time I was not yet oriented to many of the quiet happenings which were so dynamically affecting the church life in unhappy ways.

Mrs. Mills, about age 60-65 and active in the church and Sunday School, brought with her an aura of stability and maturity. She hinted at the problem in which Mrs. Williams was involved. I indicated that I had an idea that something had happened. I later gave Mrs. Williams two or three opportunities to broach the subject but she avoided discussing anything and I did not press the issue further.

Mrs. Mills later told of Mrs. Williams' having talked with her about the matter. Mrs. Williams had buried her face in her apron and wept, but seemed unable to cope with her problem beyond this.

The church program continued to move in an almost static way.

The Sunday School and Church had been saving for additional classrooms. All joined in the venture. The footings were placed in the fall of 1961. A sub-flooring was completed during the winter of 1961-62. By spring walls went up and then a roof. Doors were cut into the walls of the sanctuary and then work ceased with the advent of spring planting.

Nothing further clouded the horizon until the early fall. There were several reminders to the Session by me that the doors to the classrooms should be put in but no action was taken. December 1962 saw us in a chilly, drafty sanctuary. Christmas worship and Sunday School were abbreviated due to the cold. In January wallboard was a temporary cover. The Building Committee was beginning to feel the pressure to follow through on its job. They had the money to hire it done but preferred to do it themselves and not spend the money. Now they decided that it seemed not only wise but necessary to spend some of the money in the Building Fund to hire carpenters to set the doors in and do other necessary work towards the completion of the classrooms.

It was also at this time that a canvass was held. Some of the canvassers did not appear. I learned that they were

not becoming involved because they were put out with Mrs. Williams in the matter of Honor Pins for Sunday School attendance. Mrs. Mills told me of several other families who were put out with Mrs. Williams over the Honor Pins.

Mrs. Williams seemed to manifest a rather helpless, penitential attitude over the whole matter though she could not hurdle it. She claimed the young people laughed at her and that they differed with her in class. She was the one who had shepherded through the earlier years.

It was understandably difficult for her to take their independence now. Her husband declared that he was not going to let anyone laugh at his wife.

On February 3, 1963, the annual congregational meeting was held. Mr. Williams said to me the previous Sunday that he and his wife were planning to be away the next Sunday. He then added, "You don't need me anyway, do you?" I was surprised at the implication of rejection in his statement and replied that I surely had hoped he would be attending the annual meeting. (See Appendix G.) He then said that they were not too sure they would be going away. The following Sunday both were in church for the annual meeting.

On March 11, 1963, at a meeting of the Session, Mr. Williams turned to me and said, "Say, why don't you have the Sunday School superintendent visit Rick's folks? They might come back to church. And tell him if he'd call on me, maybe I would come back to Sunday School." The new superintendent was told about the requested visit; however, his early enthusiasm for the job had waned and no visit was ever made.

This brief chronology of events invites speculation now as to the forces at work for cohesion or division.

Disintegrating Forces within the Problem Incident

The compulsion of Mrs. Williams to speak her piece had not been well received, but had not caused any permanent rift between her and other folks.

Mrs. Williams momentarily impresses one very well with her ready comments on people and situations. However, both in my visit with her and also in a group situation (Sunday School Adult Class), Mrs. Williams demonstrated an inability to enter into a discourse on a moot issue. She made a flat statement in the Sunday School class that she was a fatalist, but she said, "I'm not going to discuss it. I just want you to know where I stand," and she would not elaborate further.

Her speaking up at the above mentioned Sunday School meeting and abruptly disagreeing with the former superintendent's procedure regarding Honor Pins, suggests that she (1) cannot identify herself with another leader's pattern of operation, and (2) she wants to get back into the superintendent's office again.

It was Tom Williams, her husband, who really felt the hurt here and took it personally. On the basis of our conversation enroute to a funeral, Tom seemed pretty well aware of his wife's failings. It was because the teenagers she had helped years earlier laughed at her that her husband was angry.

Integrating Forces Surrounding the Incident

The incident is still alive at this time, Fall 1965, though dormant. Tom and his wife had quit coming to Sunday School and Church. She began teaching the Adult Class this fall, but her husband will still not come back to Sunday School.

Mrs. Mills has been the one outstanding, actively integrating force. Her native ability to counsel with Mrs. Williams has not been in vain. It is not improper to mention myself, as pastor, as a second force for unity. But from here there are only passive-supporting elements. Mr. Stone, the former superintendent, and Mrs. South have not put oil on the fire, but have done little to quench it. Rather they have preferred to live with the problem, resigned to it as one accepts the accidents of nature's forces.

Commentary

It will probably help to begin this paragraph by announcing that Mrs. Williams has been elected as the new Sunday School Superintendent for 1966. She has not been given this nomination as a "sop," but because "she and Tom are hard workers once they start something."

There is little to contradict the conclusion that this couple dominate the congregation though at an unconscious level.

The reinstatement of the aggressive mother to her former position of authority is almost traumatic to the spectator, and proposes many questions as to the Sunday School's goals and methods, elements of dependence and anger, and

raises the issue of guilt and its resolution. What impels a people to seek the leadership of a dominant mother-figure?

What are the goals of the "mother" and where do they correlate with the obvious goals of a Sunday School? Is there an element of guilt in a people in the area of "self-assertion and independence," "anger" and their striving towards maturity and its resulting separation from the parental figures?

We are constrained by these questions to look more inquiringly at the Oedipus Complex, and at the view of Sigmund Freud and Erich Fromm on the parent-child relationship in the developing personality.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL PRESENTATIONS

The Oedipus Myth and the Developing Personality

The Myth of Oedipus Rex

In Sigmund Freud's comments on King Oedipus and the development of personality in the child, he sees the Father as severely threatening to his son, although the father does not sense this threat coming from himself. The boy, on the other hand, harbors a secret desire for his Mother, and thus is both fearful and reverent towards his strong father. All this is in the deep, psychic life of the child.¹¹

Between the ages of four to seven the Oedipus Complex (the secret feelings existing unconsciously within the boy towards his parents) is either resolved or partially worked through. Freud sees each person's character as determined by what has happened in his psychic life at this age.

In the process of determining his personality, the child adopts one or a combination of three characteristics. The first type is the "oral" personality, the second is the "anal," and the third is the "genital" personality.

Ideally each is a stage to be resolved enabling the individual to move forward confidently to the next stage.

¹¹Mullahy, op. cit.

Where he cannot move forward, he will tend to regress to the former stage so that his personality leans heavily on the values which the earlier stage can supply. Thus the adult "oral" personality can be expected to be dissatisfied, demanding, quite vocal about his wants and interests, and self-centered.

He also may be highly dependent without much motivation to do for himself. The anal personality may be a person with much concealed anger and fear. This would relate back to his toilet training and also his unexpressed attachment to Mother and subsequent fear of reprisal from his father and a desire to have his father die. All this, of course, is active in the unconscious.

The genital personality represents the person who has successfully moved forward at each stage and probably has been well supported by his parents in this process.

A summary recollection of this myth as recounted by Freud leaves one caught up with "repressed emotions" concerning the taboos of murder of one's father and incest with one's mother. (See Appendix H.)¹²

The Approach of Erich Fromm

Erich Fromm represents a sharp contrast in his interpretation. He sees Oedipus initially troubled by the patricide-incest enigmas in his life, but Fromm moves on to complete the trilogy on Oedipus and perceived that the true focus

¹²Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, trans. A. A. Brill (New York: Carlton House, 1931), pp. 160-162.

of attention is not with incest but with the conflict between father and son.

Erich Fromm sees the child's struggle from a broader perspective than that of Freud. The parents represent a polarity of principles emanating toward the child which form the matriarchal-patriarchal continuum.

Fromm sees the repressed desire of the son towards his mother as a struggle against patriarchal authority, a struggle in which the son seeks to hold on to the principles of the matriarch which he learned as an infant at her breast.

It might be pointed out here that Fromm sees the initial personality development of the child as extremely important from the material side in contrast to the Freudian view which accents the repressed desire for incest with the parent and the resolution of the attendant fear, anger and guilt over the hidden desire.

Fromm says that the goal is a wedding of the two sets of principles (matriarchal and patriarchal) just as the child's mother and father are in a parental polarity of authority and love for the child.

In its essence the continuum of the matriarchal-patriarchal principles appears as described in the Chart on the next page. This chart is elaborated from Erich Fromm's discussion of these principles.¹³

¹³Fromm, op. cit., pp. 207-208, 219-20.

CHART 2

MATRIARCHAL-PATRIARCHAL PRINCIPLES

MATRIARCHAL ATTITUDES (Intransitive or Non-Threatening Qualities)

- Liberty - The freedom to be one's self and make one's own choices, and also the freedom from being fettered or tied back by one's own neurotic needs.
- Equality - The oneness and commonality of others is the "given" of nature which enables one to step over or transcend binding cultural attitudes of discrimination, towards people and see them as springing from both the human specie and Mother Earth.
- Fraternity - The sense of the potential friendship of others, and one's own need for others as well as the need of other people for each other.

PATRIARCHAL ATTITUDES (Transitive or Threatening Postures)

- Obedience - The attitude of reverence or deference toward another's authority, especially a parent or God. The individual must submissively give up his right to choose or decide for himself.
- Favorite Son - The right of the father over his children including the right to discriminate in favor of one.
- Rational Thought - To control by reason. To seek to change nature. Scientific endeavor seen as being in a continual battle with the forces of nature.

This account of the Greek tragedy, Oedipus Rex, is taken from Erich Fromm inasmuch as he relates it to the other two plays of Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus and Antigone (Daughters of Oedipus).¹⁴

THE MYTH OF OEDIPUS REX

This tragedy (King Oedipus) tells us that an oracle has told Laius, the King of Thebes, and his wife, Jocasta, that if they have a son this son will kill his father and marry his own mother. When a son, Oedipus, is born to them, Jocasta decides to escape the fate predicted by the oracle by killing that infant. She gives Oedipus to a shepherd, who is to abandon the child in the woods with his feet bound so that he will die. But the shepherd, taking pity on the child, gives the infant to a man in the service of the King of Corinth, who in turn brings him to his master. The king adopts the boy, and the young prince grows up in Corinth not knowing that he is not the true son of the King of Corinth. He is told by the oracle in Delphi that it is his fate to kill his father and to marry his mother. He decides to avoid this fate by never going back to his alleged parents. On his way back from Delphi, he engages in a violent argument with an old man riding in a carriage, loses his temper, and slays the man and his servant without knowing that he has slain his father, the King of Thebes.

His wanderings lead him to Thebes. There the Sphinx is devouring the young men and women of the city, and she will cease doing so only if someone will find the right answer to a riddle she asks. The riddle is this: 'What is it which first goes on four, then on two, and eventually on three?' The city of Thebes has promised that anyone who can solve the riddle and thus free the city from the Sphinx will be made king and will be given the king's widow for a wife. Oedipus undertakes the venture. He finds the answer to the riddle--which is man, who as a child walks on all fours, as an adult on two, and in his old age on three (with a cane). The Sphinx throws herself into the ocean, the city is saved from calamity, and Oedipus becomes the king and marries Jocasta, his mother.

After Oedipus has reigned happily for some time, the city is ravaged by a plague which kills many of its citizens. The seer, Theiresias, reveals that the plague is the punishment for the twofold crime which Oedipus

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 204ff.

has committed, patricide and incest. Oedipus, after having tried desperately not to see this truth, blinds himself when he is compelled to see it, and Jocasta commits suicide. The tragedy ends at the point where Oedipus has suffered punishment for a crime which he committed unknowingly and in spite of his conscious efforts to avoid committing it.

Erich Fromm has done something unique in his discussion of Oedipus, the King, by moving the reader away from Oedipus in relationship to a group (parents, daughters, uncle) to seeing the individual as an internalized group. This is not exactly foreign to Sigmund Freud, but the distinction appears at a level beyond the pleasure principle of the incestuous desire which leads to patricide, and directs our attention to the etiology of society manifested in the polar tensions within the individual of matriarchal principles struggling for ascendancy over patriarchal principles and vice versa. The blending of these forces in the individual represents the nucleus of the family and of society.

Inasmuch as the recounting of the Myth varies with both Freud and Fromm, the following lines have been excerpted from the play for clarification.¹⁵

P. 105 Lines 664-719 (approximately line 705)

Jocasta: "And the Child's birth was not three days past when Laius pinned its ankles together and had it thrown by others hands, on a trackless mountain."

P. 108 Lines 950-1000 (about line 994)

Oedipus: "Was the deed my Mother's or Father's?"

Messenger: "I know not."

¹⁵ Great Books of the Western World, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), Vol. No. 5., Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripedes, Aristophanes, pp. 105, 108-110.

P. 109 Lines 1040-1095 (about line 1068)

Jocasta: "Ill-fated one! Mayest thou never
come to know who thou art!"

P. 110 Lines 1147-1190 (about line 1168)

Oedipus: "She gave it thee?" (Refers to the
parents' decision to let their child
die in the wilderness.)

Herdsmen: "Yes, O King."

Freud sees the Father as taking the decisive step to
thwart the oracle, while Fromm blames Jocasta, his Mother.

As the reader can see, the lines of the play by
Sophocles allows both Freud and Fromm to interpret as they
desire.

It is both remarkable and yet expected that other
writers, students of human life, have come to similar con-
clusions in another setting that at one point human life can
be viewed as a group, and a group of people often will act as
an individual.

The Group Seen as a Personality

Ralph Waldo Emerson in one of his essays has described
the group by describing the individual, and in so doing seems
to imply that the group being composed of congenial individuals
therefore possesses an attraction akin to that of a person.
Emerson writes:¹⁶

A man is a method, a progressive arrangement, a selec-
ting principle, gathering his like to him wherever he
goes. He takes only his own out of the multiplicity

¹⁶ Ralph Waldo Emerson, Essays (Series I and II; New
York: The MacMillan Company, 1937), Chapter IV, p. 89.

that sweeps and circles round him. He is like one of those booms which are set out from the shore on rivers to catch driftwood, or like the lodestone amongst splinters of steel. Those facts, words, persons, which dwell in his memory without his being able to say why, remain because they have a relation to him not less real for being as yet unapprehended.

He cleaves to one person and avoids another; according to their likeness or unlikeness to himself, truly seeking himself in his associates and moreover in his trade and habits and gestures and meats and drinks, and comes at last to be faithfully represented by every view you take of his circumstances.

If the individual seeks to find himself in his associates, then cannot we press this the other way: "That the group seeks its fulfillment as an extension of each of the individuals composing it?" It appears that it may be proper to view a group of like-minded people who bend their energies towards a common goal as also manifesting a personality in attitude, affect and action.

Another writer, Josiah Royce, says that the group is an entity with a mind of its own and in a literal sense exists as a person.¹⁷

In his book on crowds, Elias Canetti tells of the fear of the individual and his need for the crowd wherein he loses his identity in order to gain a larger identity.¹⁸

Canetti talks about the burden of the individual as being his consciousness of his distinctions from others, his

¹⁷James Harry Cotton, Royce on the Human Self (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 247-249.

¹⁸Canetti, op. cit., pp. 15-18.

differences which he both prizes and almost abhors, which separates him--keeps him and others at a distance.¹⁹

Theologically, this is reminiscent of the definition of sin as "that which separates" man from God and seems to direct us toward the sacred areas of a man's life, his identity and purpose.

Later Canetti discusses conversion in a light quite different from and yet amicable to Christian thought in that it has to do with a change in "crowd crystals," the individual moving by conversion from one crystal (I would call it "crowd personality") to another.²⁰

If an Oedipus complex becomes apparent, it is where Canetti describes the destruction of images as the symbolic destruction of a hierarchy, thus removing all barriers to equality and fraternity.²¹ This is similarly true, he says, in the matter of rites and ceremonies.²²

This leaves us with many intriguing and complex questions and thus diverse answers and conclusions. In a word, such conclusions might be: new birth or a regression, individuation or incest. Is there a subtle attempt in the rural church to "break the icons" of authority, to assert themselves by reaching beyond obedience and rational thought towards a new state of soul under the tricolor of liberty, equality and fraternity? Or does the "breaking of the icons" occur simply in the denying of their existence and value by regressing

¹⁹Ibid., p. 17.

²⁰Ibid., p. 18.

²¹Ibid., p. 19.

²²Ibid., pp. 20-21.

toward an earlier dependency condition in which there is no challenge, no condemnation, no separation?

It would appear that the latter conclusion carries more weight, that the rural church without a full-time pastoral-patriarchal leadership sees the challenge of individuation in daily life (the rugged individualism of its people) as a burden too great to bear.

Whatever the answers, Elias Canetti offers much in stimulating and valuable points of view. Some suggested answers to these questions are offered in the Conclusions.

A third writer is Charles H. Cooley. He speaks of primary groups, by which I would interpret him to mean any group possessing "family-like" aspects.²³ Cooley writes of this group personality as being necessary for the development of the individual personality. This is almost the question of "which came first?" Cooley would say the primary group as a personality precedes and anticipates the personality development of the child. In other words, the child's identity as an individual is drawn from the identity sense of the primary or family group in which he is raised. He later describes the group as one would describe a personality.²⁴

The primary group which Cooley seems to see as the psycho-social mother of the child has its counterparts in community organizations and among nations by our use of such relative terms as: parent organization, sister organization, Mother Church, Mother Country and Fatherland. It would appear

²³Small Groups, op. cit., p. 15. ²⁴Ibid., p. 307.

then that any primary or family group possesses the personality of a Mother.

Anticipations of the Oedipus Myth
in the Holy Bible

The writings of the Holy Scriptures are brought in for the one purpose of portraying how men and nations have looked upon groups and at the same time treated them as individual personalities. Such groups usually possess the characteristics of the primary or family group. The outstanding family group was the Israelite nation which was seen by the judges, kings and prophets as both a family group and also as an individual personality. For instance, in the matter of the sin of Achan,²⁵ we read: "then the Lord replied . . . Israel has sinned; they have violated the covenant . . ."

A brief overview of the Old Testament moving on into the New Testament depicts the Hebrew people under a patriarchal system of authority. The patriarch or father in each family had the power of retaining life or causing death to any of the members or servants of the family. Obedience to this authority was the greatest virtue, and, of course, this found its counterpart in obedience to the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic laws. The order of society was that of a hierarchy. The father was the head, and he usually had a favorite son, the son who would inherit his property and take his place as head of the family upon the father's demise.

²⁵Joshua 7:10-11.

In looking for the Messiah, the Hebrew people looked for a continuation and exemplification of their social order. Isaiah, particularly of the prophets, sought to set out the criteria for the coming Messiah, though he was not heard loud and clear.

Isaiah seems to be describing two ways of viewing life in his 53rd chapter. The Suffering Servant at first appears just like everyone else, and so is beautiful.²⁶

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

But when he asserts his selfhood, he loses his beauty and is despised and rejected for daring to be different, to grow to differentiate.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not.

His independence appears as an insult to God and his family, so his resulting trials are presumed to be the result of God's anger.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

His growth anticipates the growth of others. They see their own trials in his trials. His bruises, the battle ribbons of his victories accent the unwillingness of others to grow, their resistance or regression.²⁷

²⁶Isaiah 53: 1-2, 3, 4.

²⁷Ibid., 5, 8, 11, 10.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

He lives to be himself and does not seek to immortalize himself by conformity and regression.

He was taken from prison and from judgment and who shall declare his generation for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

By the knowledge of himself he makes individuation, self-hood, worthwhile. He bears their iniquities by suffering through his own deep desire to repress to deny self, to deny his name, i.e. his identity.

He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

His seed is those who have found identity because of him.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

The life of Jesus, his annunciation, birth, sojourn on earth, his death and resurrection accent a blending of patriarchal authority with that of the matriarch. The matriarchal principles, by the way, seem to take shape from the Creator aspect of God as well as from the creating Mother earth, and the human mother.

The principles of both the patriarch and matriarch are remarkably blended in the 23rd Psalm. The patriarchal elements appear in such words as "The Lord," "paths of righteousness

for his name's sake," "Thy rod and Thy staff." The matriarchal elements appear in the words: "my Shepherd," "I shall not want," "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures . . . still waters . . . restoreth my soul," "valley of the shadow of death . . . fear no evil for Thou art with me."

A blending is foreseen in such expressions as: "Thou anointed my head with oil," "house of the Lord," and "forever."

The New Testament moves from the "favorite son" concept of God's chosen people, Israel, to Isaiah's theme, and now presents God's chosen people as the Church, the Suffering Servant.

Christ then represents both the individual and the Church and in this portrayal outlines the spiritual struggle of both individual and Church to transcend parental-temporal-earthly obligations and arrive at a new level of self-identity.

The Sociology of the Rural Church

Purpose

To see the church, sociologically, especially the rural church, is to see it as a primary group, the family. It is a cultural phenomenon typical in any community, though in this instance a culture resulting from the spiritual movement of the people whose avowed purpose is to manifest the presence of God among the people.²⁸ This purpose is

²⁸Lowry Nelson, Rural Sociology, 2d ed. (New York: American Book Company, 1955), pp. 324, 331.

demonstrated by:

1. The emphasis on the worship of God through obedience to His Will, and the acknowledgement of sinfulness by the people,
2. the open doors of welcome to friend, neighbor, and stranger,
3. the cross symbolizing self-sacrifice and the care and concern for people, and
4. the permanence of the church implying that Help is available when other helps fail.

All this is remarkable when one considers that the rural church so often has existed for decade upon decade with little or no pastoral guidance from an ordained minister. It is a tenacious existence. Such churches are often called "Sunday School Churches" inasmuch as the life of the church centers around the Sunday School, its leaders and teachers.²⁹

Composition

The Sunday School, by its involvement on an inter-personal level appealing to every age group, stands in sharp contrast to the formal worshipping body.

The genius of the Sunday School as an educational body appears to be in the several family-like groups called classes, reaching from the youngest to the oldest member.³⁰

²⁹T. Lynn Smith, op. cit., p. 471.
 T. Lynn Smith, The Sociology of Rural Life, rev. ed. (New York and London: Harper and Bros., 1947), p. 427.
 Sanderson, op. cit., p. 328.

³⁰Dean Everest Walker, "The Challenge of the Rural Church" May 1928), Chapter 5, pp. 116-117.

Involvement may be considered as 100%. The Sunday School by its very nature of mothering does not place restrictions of membership upon any who attend Sunday School. Members and non-members of the formal church body are treated equally in the Sunday School, which is to say that there is little or no prejudice inherent in the organization of the Sunday School.

By contrast, the formal worshipping body is made up mostly of the members of the church. The membership is based on a binding act of commitment to theological principles and a system of government. The officers of the church are required to be members of the church, and, as such are expected to attend regularly.

The worship service is not one of interpersonal or person-to-person relationship, but largely a one-to-one relationship, the people submerging their own identities into the group called "the Bride of Christ" and relating themselves obediently and in humble submission to God.

Other groups of the church are represented in general by the Church Official Board, the Women's Association (Ladies' Aid, etc.), and the Young People's Fellowship.³¹

The Young People's Fellowship may be considered as almost an extension of the Sunday School. Each member of the group is equal to the other. The parental leadership offered is largely that of a mothering or pastoral sort.

The young people in this group are seeking to apply or

³¹Sanderson, op. cit., p. 311.

practice their tutored understanding of God and Christ which has come to them both at home and in the church. They are seeking to develop their own autonomy and exercise their own initiative apart from the parental leadership of the church itself.

The two principles noted above as obedience to authority and the maintenance of a hierarchy are present in the official groups of the church. While their concern might in many ways be pastoral, their manner of functioning appears to be largely that of encouraging obedience to their deliberations and goals.

The Women's Association (Ladies' Aid, etc.) is the last group noted here but by no means the least in its purpose and function. While their organizational structure is quite formal, it gives way to many of the mothering qualities of the members. Such qualities are those of being "a providing mother" and "a protecting mother."

They tend to see their task in the terms of "Martha" -- the cares of the household--providing dinners and various sales, supporting the church treasury and equipping the kitchen, making the sanctuary and other rooms both comfortable and attractive.³²

The Rural Church, More Than a Church

It is necessary here to ask: "Why does a rural church exist?" "Who are the people who make up the small rural church?" "Is the rural church more than a church? That is,

³²Ibid., p. 330.

does it find its raison d'etre primarily elsewhere than in its announced purpose of being the 'disciples of Christ,' or 'God's Congregation'?"

While the Christian faith is acknowledged readily as the foundation for a full and firm life, it would appear that the rural church serves ostensibly as a non-threatening organization through which people find themselves drawn together despite their guardedness and fears.³³ In a broad sense, the Christian church is used as an opiate, not to put the people to sleep, but rather to put at rest their interpersonal fears and conflicts.³⁴ This suggests that the people hold the church as a sort of talisman or charm that will protect them from harm and aid in the perpetuation of the things which are held sacred to their memory.³⁵

The church is seen here as both the Koinonia (or God's Congregation) and as an idol. It can put the people to sleep, lulling them into indifference towards self-fulfillment and a lack of concern for others, or it can put to sleep their natural fears, hates and drives, converting this self-centered energy by forgiveness and acceptance into channels of service to God in one's own life and in concern for the well-being of others.

It has been observed already that the Sunday School is considered the main organization of the rural church, leading

³³Canetti, op. cit., p. 15.

³⁴T. Lynn Smith, 1953, op. cit., p. 452.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 455-456.

even over the worship or preaching service.

This fact is a devastating commentary on both the preaching ministry and the kind of service which is called "Worship." Some answers are presented to us in the changing social patterns due to increased mobility of people, increased population in rural areas, consolidation of rural schools and increased communication methods.

Although the rural church is important in many ways yet the make-up of the church appears to be changing. The improved roads and methods of transportation have caused the small communities twenty to sixty miles out from metropolitan areas to become suburban bedrooms for city workers. This suggests that the make-up of the rural community is greatly modified and no longer solidly rural except in geography. But this also presents us with the probability that the suburban-rural dwellers are looking for the firmer roots, and are finding them in a rural setting.

But the Christian Faith as such appears to serve in a way not anticipated by its leaders. People are brought together for social contacts via the church organization.³⁶ It would seem that the sociability offered by and through the church appears both as the church's primary service and the individual's primary need.³⁷

Sanderson points out that the worship service takes second place to the week-day activities as each neighbor lives

³⁶ Nelson, op. cit., pp. 324, 331.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 347.

and works with his neighbors.³⁸ He also illustrates how the consolidation of schools and greater emphasis on higher education has resulted in a waning interest in the "preaching" service.³⁹ It becomes a moot question as to what those preaching services two or more generations ago were about, how deep or shallow, how subjective or objective they were? The goals of yester-year's preaching are by no means answering the needs of the people of today.

Returning again to the earlier question, "Why does the rural church exist?", especially when any ministry is usually part-time or not at all. An interesting view is entertained in the unpublished thesis of Dean Walker.⁴⁰ In his work it would appear then that the Sunday School is the "protest movement" of the people, that while the organized "city church and minister" have abandoned them, yet God will never leave them.

The parallels of relationship of the "rural church in general" to the "Paw Paw Church in particular" are quite interesting and helpful, and will be referred to later in the paper.

³⁸Sanderson, op. cit., p. 315.

³⁹Ibid., p. 327.

⁴⁰Walker, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

CHAPTER IV

THE PAW PAW CHURCH IN THE LIGHT OF THE OEDIPUS MODEL

The Church as a Family

Matriarchal-Patriarchal Tensions

Let us first of all briefly survey the church congregation for those in the role of parents or siblings, as well as authoritative elements, submissive, passive-dependent, rebelling and protest elements. (See Chart 1). It will be helpful here to draw from Erich Fromm's, The Sane Society, by describing the negative and positive aspects of matriarchal and patriarchal complex.⁴¹

The characterization of "submissive" refers to those who are willing and possibly happy to "go along" with whatever the leader suggests. Most of these would represent adults in a sibling role rather than parental role. Several of the leaders and some of the non-leaders are characterized as "passive-aggressive," and by this term the individual is portrayed as possessing some strength in his interpersonal relationships, respected for his ideas, but he prefers not to implement his ideas or plans through group discussion and

⁴¹Erich Fromm, The Sane Society (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1955), pp. 45-47.

planning. He readily gives up what may in actuality be an excellent plan or idea for the Sunday School or Church.

The organization of the Paw Paw Church provides for a formal structure somewhat like that of a family, but it is in the informal organization of the congregation that we find the family pattern that offers psychical value to the membership.

The parental individuals and couples range from the forceful to the passively weak. The most forceful and aggressive are Mr. and Mrs. Tom Williams. They cannot be considered as the strongest, except that they have been in that category up until three years ago. They are organizers, and despite the feelings of resentment which they have drawn upon themselves, they can be considered strong parental-figures, though at this time they manifest a strong current of passive-resistance.

Mrs. South, an elderly woman and member of the Session, is strong, but not an organizer. She represents the elite in the congregation, has had a fairly good education, grooms herself very well, and is comfortably well-off. She is on the go for the things that interest her, but as a leader of the Sunday School and the Ladies Aid has not demonstrated any planning ability for program, nor been able to involve others. She had tended to do everything herself and it shows.

Mr. Martin Stone represents a strong, though passive-aggressive leader. He is a fair organizer, but does not radiate the larger vision needed for the superintendency and the church.

Mr. Roy Ackerman is strong in some abilities but not an organizer. His leadership is of the passive-aggressive type. His wife is a school teacher but remains relatively unrelated to church and Sunday School.

Mrs. S. Vivian and her two sisters live together and attend church and Sunday School with relative frequency. Mrs. Vivian teaches school. One sister has retired from teaching. Theirs is a passive role in the church. The third sister is an invalid.

Mrs. Cathy Eberts is a 45 year old woman whose husband is near retirement from an Indianapolis plant and farms corn and soy beans on the side. They have four children, the oldest being about 23, married and in the service. She is outspoken and aggressive but not an organizer. When she has become put out with a certain member or two in the church, she has verbalized her feelings of anger rather freely and avoided the party involved. She helps her husband in the fields.

Mrs. Mack is a woman of 40 whose husband drives a semi-trailer for an Indianapolis company. She has three children. One daughter is married. She is friendly, quiet and responsible. If she has ideas or opinions she doesn't share them. She seems to relate herself passively to the church and Sunday School.

Mrs. Mills is an aggressive woman of about 70 years. She has definite ideas and can articulate them quite well. She is quite intelligent and fairly well read. She has a fundamentalist orientation but does not foist a narrow view upon others. She has been sickly since I have been at the

church. Despite this she has been willing to help out where she could. While she does express her views, she does not have the physical stamina to take the tension needed to follow through a discussion of differing views. She has coupled an avoidance pattern with her aggressive qualities. In all this she is still a strong woman in the church but no longer effective. She has always maintained good interpersonal relationships in the church and community.

The next three families represent those in the church who could be leaders but have preferred not to become involved.

The Travises have four children, two of whom have married two years ago and one this year. Mrs. Travis has had to be hospitalized twice for depressive feelings but has been the recipient of warm personal support by her family and the community. Her husband rarely attends church but is friendly and able to express himself quite easily. The children seem bright and humorously ridicule the Sunday School and the Church in general. It was the teen-age son, and only boy in the family, who was the focus of attention in the Sunday School incident. (See Appendix C.)

While his name was not mentioned, his running around the country on Sunday morning while claiming to be in Sunday School elsewhere created the protest action by Mrs. Williams.

Mr. and Mrs. John South (Mrs. V. South is John's mother) are both Sunday School teachers. John is an office salesman in an Indianapolis plant. He and his wife are quite well educated, attractive personally, and on friendly relations with all in the church. The children, four of them, are bright.

He seems to be overshadowed by his mother and because of his frequenting a beer tavern has never received an office other than trustee. Religiously, he would be of value on the Session. Due to all this, his role, and that of his wife, remains one of avoidance, though both attend Church and Sunday School and are reasonably aggressive in community functions and such for themselves and the children. They represent a suppressed element in the church and potentially a promise of future growth and change.

Mr. H. Pullen, former Sunday School Superintendent, no longer comes to Sunday School or Church. He remains friendly towards me and some of the church people. He is the Master of the Masonic Lodge for this year. He is a road salesman for medical supplies to doctors, could be more aggressive, has some leadership potential, but does not organize too well. His avoidance of the church and its life seems to have been sparked by something his brother-in-law said about him or to him. Martin Stone, the brother-in-law, said he did not really know why the Pullens were not attending unless it was something he had said to or about them some time back. There is apparently no communication even between the brother and sister. Martin's sister is Mrs. Pullen.

The Andersons represent another of the more intelligent in the church. He is active with both management and union being employed in a leadership position by his company. Their relationship to the church has been passive and with avoidance. (See Appendix J.)

The remaining members of the congregation fall into a sibling-limbo. Some are friendly and outgoing while others are friendly and not outgoing. There are about ten homes in this group. It is interesting to note a lack of passive-resistance elements, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Williams are the only apparent exceptions to this.

With this review of the people involved we can proceed to inquire more definitely into the interplay of matriarchal-patriarchal principles.

Mrs. Williams, in her desire to have obedience, alienated herself from several of the youth as well as some of the adults in the church. Her demand for adherence to her wishes was exacting and allowed for no flexibility. She was basically right as to the best method to use in ascertaining attendance for the honor pins. Such a method is understandable and acceptable in other similar situations. She was, however, unable to accept or tolerate the decision of the former Sunday School Superintendent, Mr. Stone. And at this time she sought to discredit his decisions and influence Mrs. Mack away from the system in operation and to align with her own (Mrs. Williams') viewpoint and method. Mr. Stone stood up for both himself and the young people by stating that this was the way that they began, and "If you can't trust the young people to tell the truth, then the Honor Pin system is not worthwhile." (See Appendix E.)⁴²

⁴²This is the gist of what Mr. Stone related to me.

Mrs. Mack sidestepped Mrs. Williams' views saying that she guessed she would go along with the system in operation at that time. (See Appendix F.)

Mrs. Williams was obedient to her sense of fair play but disobedient to the reality of the situation. She could not abide by the leadership of the immediate past superintendent and in a way seemed even to be envious of his leadership over "her young people." She saw herself as still the leader of her now grown-up class. (See Appendices D and K.)

Despite the fact that Mrs. Williams is a mother and grandmother, she appears to reflect a patriarchal position in her leadership. Obedience is first in order to goodness for her. Favoritism is a likely posture for her, though the only indications validating this appear when she speaks of "favorite hymns" and "favorite Scriptures" and in her attachment to a fatalistic interpretation of predestination. Rationality though, as a principle, does not manifest itself clearly in her relationships or expressed ideas. On the distaff side of this continuum, Mrs. Williams does not appear to experience any sense of freedom within herself; there is no evidence of a fraternal relationship with her peers or younger adults. The principle that all are equal is not clearly demonstrated positively or negatively on her part.

The derision of the young people towards her, which she has managed by her compulsiveness and determination to bring upon herself, seems to have troubled her husband, Tom, as much as it did her. He saw the young people being disrespectful towards both his wife and himself by their

snickering at her in the Sunday School business meeting. The value of their parental oversight was denied by this action, and his understandable, though not desirable, response was to order his wife to quit the Sunday School. This poutiness carried over even into their Church worship attendance.

It occurred to me later that his own experience with his father who had slapped him down for addressing a grown-up by his first name must have drawn from him a repressed instinctive desire to fight back, and that this repressed desire found an unacceptable correlate in the shocking freedom of these young people who could laugh at authority without fear of retaliation.

Mr. Tom Williams appears to be caught in a conflict between his sensed need for "fraternity, equality and freedom" and loyalty to his wife who incarnates the opposite of this. (See Appendix K.) It would almost seem that he and his wife had changed their expected roles. In many respects Tom Williams does demonstrate more the qualities of nurturance than those of the patriarch. This could be supported in part by his readiness to sense attack from authority and his defensive position in some situations.

Tom Williams is quite deferential towards authority and the church probably because of his own parental relationship with his father. He urges church attendance and membership almost apart from the spiritual values to be gained from such. This is to say, that he seems to be seeking the approval of the authorities in the church for his compulsive

drive to bring in new members. While he is a friendly person and rough in his ways, this attitude has not won friends for him or the church.

Martin Stone, while clarifying his position to the Sunday School, experienced the hostile feelings of Mrs. Williams, and then of Mr. Williams. He bore the brunt of the reaction mainly because he accepted the burden of making decisions for the others in Sunday School. In general he has preferred to avoid discussion on this or other areas of concern.

In the early part of my first year of pastoral work at the Paw Paw Church, Tom Williams had made a statement which now seems quite relevant in another sense. He described the people of the church and surrounding community as "not wanting to get involved." This was the very attitude of the church people when confronted with the flare-up in the Sunday School. They solved it by "not getting involved." Analytically, it would appear that to become involved with a leader who was angry was equivalent to a demonstration of strength against the shadow-figures of one's parents. To stay uninvolved would be equivalent to a form of submission with regressive overtones, and a denial of rebellious feelings towards authorities immediately involved. The whole incident as well as much of the life of the Paw Paw Church is programmed toward a family, parent-child relationship which anticipates submission by some, passive-aggressive behavior by others, and adolescent reaction (rebellious and avoidance) by others.

Goals and Values

To try and look at goals and values is to seek to determine what is to be gained by the regressive responses of this congregation towards life situations.

Gordon Allport offers a polarity of values that almost approximates the matriarchal-patriarchal continuum which Fromm developed. He writes:⁴³

Belonging to a church because it is a safe, powerful, superior in-group is likely to be the mark of an authoritarian character and to be linked with prejudice. Belonging to a church because its basic creed of brotherhood expresses the ideals one sincerely believes in is associated with tolerance.

Allport's statement serves well as an introduction to this portion on Goals and Values. It seems quite apparent that the search for values is in a "No Man's Land," and the battle is being fought in the choice between the maturity needs for new adventure and concomitantly a larger life of service, and the needs of the immature still struggling to come of age, still over-determining the authority of others about them.

The values of conformity and obedience are in support of the dependency values of the mothering in-group which offers safety and strength to all within the group.

While Mrs. Williams seems to demonstrate a patriarchal attitude towards the church people, it is remarkable to note that the church congregation itself neither supports nor possesses a strong patriarch.

⁴³ Gordon Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (Cambridge, Mass.: Addison Publishing Co., 1954), pp. 452-453.

It seems clear that there is a sharp distinction existing between the family-group portrayal of the church which focuses largely upon its own security, and the fraternal values of the brotherhood group of the church which seeks to reach out to all family groups in the community as equal and as brothers.

The Spiritual Health of the Church

The isolated vignettes from the life of this church, captured in the visits, letters and reported meetings appear in this paper as the manifest symptomatology of a condition which is giving heartburn to the beloved community. It is out of such fragments of relationships that we can now turn to assess the spiritual health of this church.

The question facing us in the study of the psychic and spiritual health of the Paw Paw Church is to ascertain if and in what way the Oedipus Complex has been resolved. In different words, has the church as a congregation nurtured on the milk of the Word been able to resolve its ties to mothering elements of a negative sort and move out towards stronger food, towards establishing new authority relationships blending with the positive elements of the patriarch? One would expect that it would take the formal group accenting group of congregational discipline, accenting conscience and individualism to create the tension necessary to break the regressive hold of the in-group presently manifested by this church.

As in the play of Oedipus Rex, it is difficult to determine who is responsible for the decision to thwart the

Oracle, that is, to thwart the natural process of personality development for the child or "group entity."

The more critical issue is to recognize and deal with the tensions seeking to effect the balance rather than to unrealistically seek to resolve a conflict by adaptation, submission to one side of the tension or outright avoidance of the difficulty.

In the trilogy on Oedipus much of the resolution is worked through because the Uncle, Creon (a father-figure) and a mother-figure, Oedipus' daughter, Antigone, are in a conversational or dialogue relationship with Oedipus.

The resolution of the polarity of parental forces takes place then in community on two levels, the authority level upwards toward the parent-figures and horizontally towards peer relationships. The incident itself upon which this paper focuses in part becomes a portion of the process towards spiritual growth and health for the Paw Paw Church.

In summary it will take the motive for spiritual health in each of the members working and living as a community to find their personal spiritual health, and to make alive the Church.

The Church as a Personality or Group-Entity

Matriarchal-Patriarchal Tensions

The church congregation is but one entity in the community of groups in which it exists. The image of the Paw Paw Church is a prestige image in the larger community. It is

closely linked with the Masonic Lodge, and seems to represent the distaff side of two distinct organizations in the immediate community within a two-mile radius. Neighboring church groups are Baptist and Assembly of God which are about four miles north of the Paw Paw Church. Four miles east there is a Disciples and a Methodist Church. In the two-mile radius of the Paw Paw Church there are more than 100 homes and farm families. Many of these have no church ties nor do they desire to affiliate with any church.

While the aspect of the Church as a group-entity or personality has not been closely studied in any depth, an outsider senses the presence of this group-personality with some surprise, as a church unwilling to identify itself as Christ's church in the world. If, as Royce suggests, the lonely, isolated and lost soul comes to himself in the community, then it would appear that a group of lonely and isolated souls have founded a community with which they are identified, and which reflects back to them their own lack of identity.⁴⁴

If this is even partly accurate, then Carl Jung's observations on symbols would lead us to conclude that such a "lack of identity" in a church confirms the view that this group uses the church to "return to the womb," to regress to that earlier state of pre-individuation.⁴⁵

⁴⁴James Harry Cotton, Royce on the Human Self (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 247-249.

⁴⁵Carl Jung, Symbols of Transformation, Collected Works, Vol. 5, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1956), pp. 226, 261.

The statement noted earlier from Gordon Allport presents both individuals and groups seeking that which offers equality, safety and a powerful superior. Equality and safety are the principles of the mother, and so the powerful superior appears to be also a mother. There is a speculative answer of "Yes" to the question as to whether Allport's statement applies to the church at Paw Paw.

A patriarchal figure would imply an authoritarian stance as a most typical quality, but the aggressiveness seen in this church is not directed towards a patriarchal figure since no such person, group or committee dominates the church. Add to this the ineffectiveness of the officers and teachers to give strong leadership to the church and Sunday School, and one comes up with the answer that this group-personality has not yet come of age.

The Values Held by this Group-Personality

The values of the church as a personality appear to be largely in the matriarchal area.

Equality as a value carries with it a juvenile need for nurturance in an unchallenging family relationship. With this state of equality there is little impetus to reach out to a larger sense of fraternity beyond itself, to see its personality extended towards others beyond its own group and identifying itself as an arm of Christ.

The Paw Paw Church, according to its history and also by my observation from personal experience, seems to have never sensed itself as Christ's Church or God's Congregation.

Like a child unwilling to leave home, clinging to the skirts of his mother, the personality of this church perceives safety as a second value and flees to the undemanding protection of the local mothering body rather than mature.

The third value is that of continuing what might be described as a spiritual delinquency toward the call to obedience (or discipline), towards discipleship and a call to new adventure.

Despite all this there are elements directing this "personality" toward spiritual health. While it is not germane to this study, and before moving on to the further considerations, it is interesting to observe that the public schools and the agencies of the secular community play a positive mothering and fathering role for this group and its surrounding community through education, discipline, through sports and other activities and equality and fraternity in its various modes of service to mankind.

Elements for Spiritual Health

Dr. Marie Jahoda, in her book, Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health, presents six major categories for determining mental health or movement towards health.⁴⁶ In brief they are:

⁴⁶ Dr. Marie Jahoda, Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1958), p. 22.

<u>Key Word</u>	<u>Category</u>
1. Identity -	The attitude of the individual towards himself.
2. Motivation -	Growth, Development or Self-Actualization
3. Balance of Psychic Forces -	Integration
4. Decision-Making	Autonomy or independence of social influences (Self-determination or Self-surrender)
5. Empathy, Awareness of Others -	Perception of reality
6. Adequacy in Personal Relationships -	Environmental mastery

The movement towards spiritual health is seen potentially in all of the above categories, and there are elements in the life of this church which are more clearly indicative of such a positive direction.

A sense of identity may be developing more clearly as witnessed in the setting up of road signs to indicate the presence of their unmarked church. They are at least planning for a sign on or in front of the church.

There does not seem to be a balance of psychic forces which is the large concern of this paper. The balance that does exist is one favorable towards a matriarchy.

Autonomy has occurred almost by default when the National Missions Committee on the Rural Church would no longer allow support monies to the Paw Paw Church. She is now free to move in several directions without reporting to the supervisor, National Missions Committee, and feeling inhibited because of such oversights. Autonomy has been encouraged by myself as pastor.

The three questionable areas appear to be those of Self-Actualization, Perception of Reality and Environmental

Mastery. This suggests that there is a need for the catalytic forces, the pastor and officers in the formal structure, to remotivate towards the development of group awareness and satisfaction through goals that offer fulfillment for the group. Perception of Reality, which is taken to mean an empathy or awareness of others, their needs and feelings, is a category that clearly affects the sense of mission and responsibility for their fellow man. Programming is needed here, and will have to be sparked by the formal structures of the church. The last category, Environmental Mastery, seems to suggest that there is a need for the Paw Paw Church to tie the mountain top ecstatic visions with everyday, earthy experiences in human needs and relationships, in work, in play and friendships.

As one looks over this in the light of Dr. Jahoda's categories for mental health, it seems quite clear that this has been the program of the larger church for years, which has somehow been lost to the smaller churches such as the one at Paw Paw.

We have viewed the Paw Paw Church from the "case study" approach and have obtained a fairly empirical picture of this church by taking a sampling of the relationships sustained by her people and studying their spiritual immaturity in the light of psychoanalytic approach to the Oedipus Myth, the nature of crowds and individuals, the nature of the rural church as a cultural phenomenon. While the study is quite complex, quite limited and without any statistical data or testing results to reflect to us some

correlation of our conclusions, there are still some reasonably valid implications which present themselves.

Implications of the Thesis

The Individual Personality and the Oedipus Model

The thesis of this paper seeks to describe how the dynamics of the Oedipus Myth are operative among the members of the church. More specifically, it is the intent of this paper and the thesis to deal with the personality struggle which Erich Fromm perceived as operative within the individual. Such a struggle can be expected to make its appearance also in the social process of the congregation as a family.

It appears then that the pastor can look at the personality difficulties of individuals in his congregation as a manifestation of the struggle within the matriarchal-patriarchal continuum, and operative in the family relationship of the total congregation or a family-like segment of the congregation.

It would be erroneous to assume that the struggle implied something that was evil or sinful as such. Rather the struggle can be seen as a portrayal of the process of spiritual growth in the particular individual. This paper suggests that both individuals and groups manifest a level of spiritual growth which can be charted along the line of values and principles in the matriarchal-patriarchal continuum.

The ideal balance in this continuum of principles is the blend of the Law with Grace, the patriarchal legalism tempered by the matriarchal graces. This balance or resolution

of the Oedipus Complex is demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. More abstractly, this suggests that the Christ Myth can be observed as an approaching equivalent to the Oedipus Myth as described by Erich Fromm.

Where a congregation favors the patriarchal stance, religious legalism seems to rule the day. Jesus called the Pharisees to account for this, and we now speak of this as Pharisaism. Jesus then redefined the "favorite son" principle seen in the Old Testament by the phrase "the chosen people," as meaning the "suffering servant" enunciated in Isaiah.⁴⁷

Where the people lean to the matriarchal posture, then we can expect the ingrown, socially incestuous family to be in control of the congregational life and direction.

The scene in Gethsemane depicts at least in part the struggle and resolution of the individual person or group (church) as he deals with the inner forces and principles claiming ascendancy over other forces in the parental polarity.⁴⁸ At the cross, where Jesus' mother is given into John's care, one can sense the relinquishing of his attachment to his mother in this act.⁴⁹ The burial in the cave of the earth with the concomitant new birth or resurrection portrays the spiritual resolution of matriarchal attachment.⁵⁰ While the burial, a brief symbolic return to the womb of the

⁴⁷ Isa. 53. ⁴⁸ Matt. 26:36-46.

⁴⁹ John 19:26-27. ⁵⁰ Matt. 27:50-61; 28:1-8.

great Mother of all men, seems to represent the temptation to return to the mother in a regressive move. Still this grave could not contain him, and Jesus, resisting this temptation to regress, rose as the Christ, announcing by his resurrection a new birth and happy resolution of the introjected parental forces of mother and father.

The Paw Paw Church and the Oedipus Model

What does all this imply for the Paw Paw Church? At the risk again of some repetition we can make some conclusions in this.

Just as Oedipus, when he realized his sin, his humanity, his shame, was unable to accept it or face it and put out his eyes, so the Paw Paw Church seems to have blinded her eyes to her own spiritual deficits and her unwillingness to venture forth beyond herself to the community about her.

The Paw Paw Church accepts herself only in part as the Church. Her faith in God is closer to trust in a Mother who is all-providing, than in God as the Father of all, and Christ as the brother of all.

Realistically, the Paw Paw Church, like many others, seems to exist for herself. She functions largely as a matriarchy maintaining a family-type of relationship, which is exclusive in character rather than inclusive. She manifests a sense of brotherhood mostly under the mild pressure of the more patriarchal organization about it--i.e., the regional, state or national body.

It is to be expected that the struggle she experiences as the church in the world will not necessarily diminish, but with increased awareness of her role as Christ's Church, she should experience more satisfaction in the involvement which the struggle brings and the continual resolution of the forces or principles in tension.

The implication of this study hints at the need to take a second look at the place of worship, the format of this service, that it might become a more satisfactory vehicle to relate the individual and the church herself to God and to the community near and far.

The act of worship is secondary to the sense of sin, seen as man in separation from God above and God in the hearts of his fellows. The Paw Paw Church does not seem to have a distinct conception of her sinfulness as a necessary part of her spiritual life, but rather seems to see sin as foreign or irrevelant to her spiritual life. Sin as a dynamic concept of the human being in the process of spiritual growth and maturity is replaced by a moralistic view of daily conduct which is held by many of the Paw Paw Church congregation.

Just as Oedipus in the myth of personality development needed to move out from his kingdom upon the recognition of his spiritual state, and needed to be in conversation with his uncle, Creon, and his daughter, Antigone; needed to move to a new spiritual level near the city of Colonnus, so the Paw Paw Church needs to find itself in a spiritual dialogue of

action and service (the patriarchal-matriarchal continuum) beyond its own borders of membership lines.

Conclusions

The writing of this paper has been over a three year period partly out of the chagrin of not knowing the situation too clearly, and partly out of the value of letting time give depth and dimension to observations and conclusions.

An attempt was made to develop a questionnaire which would sharpen up the presence of the Matriarchal-Patriarchal continuum in the Paw Paw Church and in one nearby rural church. The returns on the questionnaire were not satisfactory and the defects of the questionnaire which had been developed became obviously apparent. There was a willingness of the people in the two churches to fill out the questionnaire and return it, and it would seem here that in a study of this nature such a questionnaire might well be used both as an aid in the study, and as a device that would be of value to the congregation for conversation and in study groups.

Inasmuch as the study of the Paw Paw Church via the Oedipus Myth has been one that has given me many insights, enabled me to respond less subjectively to the problems in the church, it would appear to me that the thesis could serve other ministers very well in this way. The one problem, that is real enough to be a barrier, is that the use of psycho-analytic materials has always been suspect in the areas of faith. Also there are those individual ministers who would tend to misappropriate the insights by failing to make the

transitions from psychiatry to the spiritual life of the individual involved.

It is not difficult to perceive the church in the social capacity of being a mother with the mothering qualities of nurturance, education and guidance being dominant.

What is difficult for the minister as shepherd of his flock is the task of viewing the church as a female figure, and particularly a mother-figure. It is more difficult to perceive the incestuous quality in the spiritual life of people who have become ingrown, who have accented the needs of the immediate church family and frankly bypassed the responsibility for others outside the church. The mothering church seems to say: "My children need me as the local mothering group to provide shelter, comfort, and protection for them."

At the other end of the continuum, the patriarchal church, with its primary emphasis on obedience, hierarchy and discrimination, does not appear as capable of providing a solution.

Neither the matriarchal nor the patriarchal church appears to present her people with a basically Christian approach to life. The provincial cultural need seems to have displaced the Christian emphasis. Such a cultural need would be observable in the relationship of the adult leaders towards their own parents. From such a relationship one could anticipate strong, unacceptable feelings of hostility towards parents and thence to other authorities in the church. The

adults temporarily resolve such feelings by controlling the church life. The church, locally, is the totem figure offered up by the leaders as a "living sacrifice" to deny their hostility, and attest to their willingness to become subservient to the local congregation and its wishes. Such subservience or submission seems to carry regressive overtones from both a matriarchal and patriarchal position. The matriarchal picture, however, dominates here even though it shares some patriarchal factors.

It is interesting to note some validation of these conclusions in the Paw Paw community by the polarity of two forces, the Church and the Masonic Lodge. The regressive elements of the Mothering Church at Paw Paw with the enticement to undifferentiated living stands out in marked polar contrast to the Lodge with its emphasis on the Patriarchs and its highly symbolic rituals accenting authority, order, obedience and independence of thought.

The goal of the Church of Christ to "return unto the Lord" is read in terms of the regressive impulse of the people to "return to an earlier state." That the maintenance of distinctions becomes intolerable is manifested in the emasculation of the various offices by denying the strength of a disciplined system through avoidance of scheduled meetings, inadequate record keeping and the use of impromptu congregational meetings as though the church family were more administratively appropriate than the elected officers. The employment of discipline and reason serves to remind the congregation of their human limitations and their unbearable

differences. The only direction in the face of such obstacles appears to be "incest" in the psychic life of the group which denies the existence of any potentate, be he father, officer, minister or the administrative organization of the church. The return to mother (incest) appears then not only in the resistance to authority or rulership as noted above, but also in the over-determined value placed on equality, freedom and fraternity.

The goal of this church or any church in particular is to blend the mature elements of both ends of the matriarchal-patriarchal continuum. Such a process of maturation ought to involve three processes in concurrent operation:

1. Discipline--an involvement of people in an inter-personal relationship to the church authority above their local church, and to the responding presence of the church within each person of the Paw Paw Church.
2. Dialogue--an inter-relationship of these people in which they see themselves as the confessing community; a community that confesses its weaknesses and shares its strengths; a community that becomes aware of its horizontal relationships (person to person), but not without the vertical relationship (person to God in Christ). Such a dialogue might necessarily begin via discussion groups composed of the leavening elements within the Paw Paw Church. The dialogue can be enlarged as the need to hear

what others (outside the local church) are saying about life and faith.

3. The use of symbolism has been intensive in this paper, directing our attention both dynamically and dramatically to individual and group responses to daily life and its mythological significance. Symbols, or the use of art forms, transcend time, place and person for us, and bring us to a different dimension of life which may be called "Worship" though often secularly referred to as "inspiration." The Paw Paw Church has used symbolism of a regressive nature. This has been apparent in the appearance of the building being both without a name or symbol of a church such as a cross or spire. It has been further apparent in the leadership and apparent lack of Christian goals in the Sunday School. (That "salvation" is considered a goal, is to my mind a general term which is prized for its unspecificity, and seems to carry an intra-personal rather than inter-personal meaning for the people.)

Regressive elements have also been present symbolically in the lack of Holy Communion between the people themselves, and the paucity of attendance at the Lord's Supper. In the same light, the worship service itself is perceived in terms of how much the minister gets paid for each Sunday. An unusual decision was made this year (1966) to have a Good Friday Service instead of an Easter Service. In this

way they would only need to pay the minister for one service and avoid paying an extra \$20.00 for the additional service.

It is to be expected that the involvement of the congregation in discipline and dialogue would lead to a new sense of worship, a reviving or renewing, a making alive the symbols of faith such as the cross of sacrifice and redemption, and the cup of fellowship and service.

Areas for Future Study

The best materials written on the rural church came from the field of Sociology. The writings by churchmen, which I surveyed for use in this paper, by and large did not deal with dynamics so much as with administrative techniques. It is recognized that there may be extant books which the church has put out recently which are more to the point in this matter. This paper, however, is not as much concerned with the minister per se as with the Oedipus Myth and its operation in the rural church.

Since it appears that some of our best leadership comes from the rural areas, it would seem to me that our church leaders have treated the rural churches as step-children offering them the dregs of service and materials which were not readily adaptable in the smaller churches of 100 members or less.

The study of this particular rural church based on the myth of Oedipus Rex has posed many interesting and searching

questions. Four such prominent concerns are: (1) the obvious problem of "Why the rural church tends toward maternal dependency?"; (2) the use of symbols by the church which either carry it forward toward greater maturity or tie it back to neurotic immaturity; (3) the kind of myth a particular church may be seeking to live out (viz., the Christ myth or some other myth as a reasonable or even ineffective substitute for the Christ myth); and finally (4) the role which the minister plays in the "living-out myth" of the church which he pastors.

It would seem to me that ministers could be helped to evaluate their role in the church. Such a study would serve to relieve the minister of much anxiety about his flock and their complex concerns, difficulties and problems by focusing his attention and energies on the backdrop of the church as a family and as a group-personality.

The theological value for both pastor and congregation of seeing their faith more dynamically operative in daily life suggests the need for a new approach to Christian education. The academic and historic approach in our church schools and their literature does not allow for a relevant reading and comprehension of the Christian message of sacrifice and redemption, of what Elton Trueblood has so often referred to as "sacramental living." Such a program of education would take, for instance, the problem of sin and treat it as appropriate to the context of everyday life, rather than an intrusion which can be identified, catalogued and cast out of life.

There is an area that intrigues me and which further study would likely be both interesting and productive. This is the study of the dynamics of worship and the calling into question of the present formal pattern of worship which now seems to be a sort of rehearsal for what is considered the appropriate manner in which God is worshipped and man reconciles himself to his fellowman in confession, forgiveness and service. The present order of corporate worship too often becomes a reversal of Christ's command to "go into all the world." There is a need for the organized particular church to decentralize its worship and educational programs while maintaining the necessary centralized administrative structure and planning to continue its program in the community.

Lest I go further and begin to suggest that this study carries implications calling for changes in the curriculum of our seminaries, I shall terminate this paper by stating that studies in the field of the esthetics, the art forms and symbols may well lead us to new views and appreciation for man's ever present need to worship his Creator.

are reasons why we should be profoundly grateful to the Great Head of the Church for the omens of good we find in the congregation. I have visited 18 families and have been most cordially received in all of them. The most discouraging feature I see in the work is a careless indifferent spirit in regard to the interests of the church. I ask you to devise some method by which there may be infused into your membership a more loyal spirit for their church.'

' . . . I am happy to report that you have an interesting Sunday School. It is not as well attended by your members as it should be; your own wisdom will suggest the proper legislature for this line of work without any suggestions from me . . . '

APPENDIX B

A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING--AUGUST 25, 1963

On August 25th, a Congregational Meeting was held at the Paw Paw Church. The purpose was to consider ways and means for the purchase of a heating plant.

The Trustees presented some information on costs and the installation of the plant and two men, from a nearby town, were present to discuss the kind of plant they were willing to put in.

It was apparent that it would take more money than many had expected, about \$2,500.00.

The following Sunday, September 1st, I was at a young people's conference and church service was conducted, I believe, by a former pastor.

A Congregational Meeting to be held was called, without advance notice, following the worship service. The Trustees, Elders and congregation voted to borrow the money, three of the officers signing their names to a note for this money.

No called committee meeting was held by the session or Trustees prior to this Congregational Meeting and following it, no one informed the Pastor for two or three Sundays of the action that had been taken.

COMMENTARY ON THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
AUGUST 25, 1963

Following my hearing of this meeting, which was at least two weeks, if not three weeks after September 1st, I found myself angry and chagrined that no thought had been taken to follow an orderly procedure in any way with respect to the matter of borrowing money. No planning was done that I know of nor were the people adequately informed of the forthcoming meeting.

There are two ways of looking at this action: First of all, it does appear as though there is a flaunting of authority on the surface in the unordinary way in which they proceeded; secondly, the action was done with not too much equality but a great deal of fraternity and liberty.

To sum it up, here again one sees a group of people acting in community with a fair amount of agreement and yet almost unable to accept an orderly process in their action. There is no record at this time of the above meeting of September 1st. The only records are those of the names of the three officers on the promissory note for \$2,500.00 to pay for the heating system.

APPENDIX A

THE HISTORY OF THE PAW PAW CHURCH, 1858--1958, AN EXCERPT

". . . Rev. O. C. Hawkins was followed by Rev. A. W. Hawkins and he likewise left a complimentary notation upon his leaving. Dated October 20, 1875, he wrote, 'I take my leave of this congregation where I have labored with some degree of pleasure and success for three years. May God's blessing attend them during the future.'

Of a different nature was the farewell notation of a pastor a short time later, in which he wrote, 'This day my connection closes with the Paw Paw congregation. The past year has been one of great embarrassment to both preacher and people. For years family difficulties have been sinking the congregation. In addition financial trouble has disabled the congregation so as to cause it to give up the engagement of a preacher. In retiring it seems but reasonable to say that I fear the congregation is entirely done.'

But in spite of such dire prediction the congregation was not done. A new pastor was engaged and the church continued.

. . . In 1894 Rev. J. B. Hadlock made the following report to the session, 'Dear Brethren, in my first report to you I cannot say what I would like to have said, but there

APPENDIX C

LETTER FROM MRS. WILLIAMS, MARCH 19, 1962

Rev. Alexander:

There are two or three things I wished to write you about. First, "Good Friday" services--long ago I mentioned it to you. Tom wished me to drop them along with my S. S. work but Good Friday is church primarily not S. S. They were started by me and I have always done them. If you wish to have them, I have told Tom I want to go ahead with them. I always asked permission of Mr. Stokes (he got permission of Elders) he worked with me every year, but one, that year I got the minister from Greenfort. I presume if you want to have the service you will wish to bring it up at April Session meeting which would give time to work them up. If not then I'll drop my part of them. I'll enclose an old program and you'll see that it is carried on by young people in 1st. part and turned over to you for a short sermon, prayer and communion service--just however you want to do it.

Tom said you mentioned Palm Sun. and Easter perhaps you would prefer stressing those and leaving out Good Friday.

Then Tom said you talked about music or especially singing. We are not outstanding singers here but I have used them--I know who sings or will try. Also two years I had a

group--sort of choir sing, last year for Easter morning and one year for Good Friday, and it was very nice, but it takes prodding and pushing. We even managed a quartet (not wonderful). Some of younger ones can sing and I have always used them in G. F. and Easter. We have no song leader nor am I one. But you and your wife are both lovely singers and Tom says you play the banjo--why not a duet from you? If you cared to lead the group and work with them am sure they would help. I have always had trouble with an organist. Generally have fallen back on my daughter who is here around G. F. and Easter. Also have stepped out and imported so to speak organist from elsewhere.

One more thing--you will never know how badly I felt about giving up my class. I organized it, built it up, planned their good times etc. Tom insisted and I agreed--right or wrong but Rev. Alexander we still believe no S. S. should be run by a select few, no Sec. report and giving of attendance pins unfairly. I believe a S. S. is an organization that should be run as fairly and honestly and uprightly as any other organization. These said conditions are there and will remain.

Thank you for taking my class, for the nightly service you are giving and I hate to admit it but I still love them and do wish them well. Thank you for listening to my letter. We both like you as our Pastor, are with you in whatever you wish to do. We are both workers and pushers for the right.

Sincerely,
Ruth Williams

COMMENTARY ON THE LETTER FROM MRS. WILLIAMS
DATED MARCH 19, 1962

Mrs. Williams has a kind of all or nothing approach to the work of the church. She is willing to do what she wants to do and, if I am not in agreement, she is willing to simply give it up. More specifically, it is her service on Good Friday and she sees no need of cooperating with me or vice versa. She is conducting the whole thing. The general impression of the first part of this letter is that Mrs. Williams has a patriarchal (and/or autocratic) approach to both the church program and to people involved.

With respect to her comments in the last two paragraphs, it becomes again apparent that she, as well as her husband, have a patriarchal approach to the kind of service they have to give to the church. The emphasis on the fair and unfair is not related to a sense of equality but rather a sense of law and order, in that she felt that one of the young people (and possibly others) were fibbing about their attendance at other churches on Sundays, that they did not attend at Paw Paw.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. T. WILLIAMS, DECEMBER 29, 1962

Mrs. Williams came to the door in response to my knock, saying "Oh, it's you, Rev. Alexander, I heard a car drive up but I thought it was someone else. Well, come on in. Tom isn't here." We went into the livingroom and she asked me how I liked the renovation of the two rooms with the new wall to wall carpeting. It looked very attractive. We talked about Christmas. She observed that my daughter was not along this time on my visit. I said, "No, not this time."

I launched into the subject that I was wondering if she would give me some idea as to what the disagreement was in the Sunday School some time last February or March.

Mrs. W.: "Well, I'll tell you one thing. I am at the root of it all. You want to hear about this? Well, I'll tell you the whole thing--that will satisfy your curiosity I suppose.

(Comment: She seemed to be saying that she was not going to recognize that I had a pastoral purpose in this visit, almost denying the possibility of a pastoral purpose by saying

"That will satisfy your curiosity--."

Did someone send you here to see me about this?"

Mr. A.: "No. I got this note from you last spring and I knew something was wrong. Mr. Williams had mentioned that you were a little concerned about something and you had quit Sunday School. I will say this, last September I talked with Mrs. Mills about my concern that something was amiss. She gave me a general picture of who all were involved and that it was regarding Sunday School pins.

Mrs. W.: "Well, it all began about three years ago. Mr. Stone announced that they were going to have pins for attendance in Sunday School. This was alright, but then he said they could miss four times during the year as long as they were attending some other Sunday School or church. Then he said they didn't need to have a written note from the teacher or minister at the other church, they would just tell their teacher here and that would be alright. I stood up and said I thought they should bring a written note from the church where they went and present this to their teacher here. Well, this came up again this last spring. Doris Mack was superintendent this year and Mr. Stone was just determined he was going to continue with the pins because they are five-year pins. Doris had told me she was not going to listen to him but she did anyhow. So Doris said in Sunday School that they were going to continue with the pins for

attendance and if there were any absences, they should just tell what church they had been at. So I stood up again and said what I thought was proper, that they should bring a note from the Sunday School or church they had been at. John South, Lucy Stone and some of the others laughed about it and they didn't think it was necessary. Even some of the older young people, like the Travis', laughed about it. This made Tom mad. He told me later when we got home that he was not going to have anyone laughing at me and that I should quit teaching Sunday School. Maybe I should be proud that he feels that way, but I didn't want to give up teaching, but I felt if that was the thing to do, that's what I'd do.

(Comments: Mrs. Williams ordinarily talks very fast with clipping words and expressions. One would get the feeling on this particular visit that she talked fast in order to say what she thought without holding back--as though she wanted to get it off her chest and have done with it.)

The thing is that Mr. Stone listens to Lucy and Frank Eberts listens to his wife and the Pullen's are relatives to the Stones so it's just a solid group here that is determined to have their way.

I know, Reverend Alexander, that you think a lot of the Travis' and you think a lot of Doris Mack and Linda and you think a lot of the Eberts, but I am just telling you how I feel. I'm just not going to

hold back anything. You know I have been just sick all year about all this. Every time I go to church, it has just been to face this."

Mr. A. : "You know, I have been wondering a little bit about how this matter of Sunday church worship, the prayers and the sermon has entered into this. Did this seem to help at all?"

Mrs. W.: (shaking her head) "No, I just could not enjoy the church service at all. I just think about all this. It's just like a big cloud."

Mr. A. : "How do you think this might be worked out? Have you thought about this?"

Mrs. W.: "Yes--you know, of course, that I like to have my way and maybe I'm at fault in that way. I feel that if they would just do this, this way that it would work out. I felt maybe by the end of the year things would work out and we could all start new this new year, but I don't know."

Mr. A. : "You know I have been wondering--has anyone ever suggested that this be brought before the Session?"

Mrs. W.: "Now that's funny. I told Tom that this should be brought up to the Session and I told him several times. But he said, 'No,' and that this was not to be brought up and he was not going to do it."

Mr. A. : "It seems to me this would be a big help and take the burden off a lot of people. The Session's concern and responsibility is with the spiritual life of their people and they are responsible for the Christian

education work of the church. What bothers me is that this did not come to my knowledge or the Session's at all. No one has seen either me or the Session."

Mrs. W.: "Now, another thing--I have had the Good Friday candle-light Communion service for years. I brought that service back from another church that I used to attend. Everyone has turned out very well for this service and have always liked it. But this last Good Friday it seemed as though Doris Mack was just determined to be underhanded, if you don't mind my saying so. She seemed to almost deliberately go around and try to find out who had a copy of this service. She checked in Covertown and other places and then she lined up the Job's Daughters and just told me one Sunday she was bringing them in for the service. Well, I was completely floored--I didn't know what to say."

Mr. A. : "How do you think that could be handled again this year?"

Mrs. W.: "Well, would you want it this year?"

Mr. A. : "Yes, I think it would be good. How could it be handled so we wouldn't run into this difficulty again?"

Mrs. W.: "Well, I'll go ahead and plan to do it this year then."

(Comment: She seemed at this point to be without any insight as to how she might modify her approach.)

Mr. A. : "Would it be possible for you to pull in the Sunday School Superintendent, one of the teachers and

yourself and form a committee to take care of this service? You all could perhaps outline it and then present a rough outline to the Sessions."

Mrs. W.: "Well, if you would like it. I think we could do that. I'll plan on it.

Now there's another thing. I have been with the young people every since they have been little kids and plan things for them. This year, I planned to take them ice skating. Tom wouldn't take a load this time but I went along anyway. It seems as though the young people now are all of a mind to go their own way."

(Comments: Mrs. Williams seemed to indicate in many ways that she had lost some kind of hold of leadership which she had over the young people and other young adults in the church.)

Mr. A. : "Just looking back on some of this, I think we get a pretty fair picture here of what people are like in any situation. I see it in schools, lodges, in almost any group--this matter of how people meet problems and resolve them. My own feeling would be that the young people were not laughing at you at all, but that more likely they were laughing under the excitement of seeing their elders fight with one another.

What I am saying is that perhaps a large part of this problem is a matter of authority. In many ways you represent the maternal figure and it seems as

though this is not only true for the young people but also for some of the young adults."

Mrs. W.: "Well, yes, I can see that. I think this is true."

Mr. A. : "We all have an abundance of programs on radio and TV that help to take off some of our angry feelings, but it's something different when you come face to face with it. It seems as though this whole problem is feelings of anger towards someone in authority. My own feelings would be that they probably are not angry with you but you become a kind of person on whom they can displace their anger and retaliation rather than on their own mother or parents."

(Comments: The Stone's, Mack's, Ebert's, South's are all in the young adult group and these are people whom she has been unable to control or manipulate.)

Mrs. W.: (laughing) "Well, I think you have a point there. Maybe I should see a psychiatrist."

Mr. A. : "Well, at \$25.00 a visit, I don't know if you would be seeing one for very long."

(Comments: I feel this statement of hers was perhaps the first connection that she was beginning to make--some kind of a tie-in between the dynamics of the situation and her own emotional involvement. It is interesting that she sees the psychiatric angle much quicker than she sees the religious element.)

"You know it is almost as though we see this business of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel and others all over again in our church life as well as in other areas of life."

Mrs. W.: "Well, I have just been so sick of this. I feel so terrible about it that I made up my mind if things were not any different by the end of this year I would just quit. In fact, I wasn't going to come to church on Sunday."

Mr. A. : "Sounds like maybe you have changed your mind. You come to church and suddenly you come to see the distinction between what ought to be and what is not, between righteousness and sin. It's my feeling, Mrs. Williams, that if you look at this, not in terms of how you are involved in a particular problem, but seeing this as a problem that has always faced people--like Isaiah in the Old Testament, we find ourselves saying: 'Lord, I am a person of unclean lips and unclean heart.'"

Mrs. W.: "Well, Rev. Alexander, maybe things will work out. I'll tell you how I am--I'm just like an ostrich, I stick my head in the sand, so I don't see it."

Mr. A.: "It seems to me that with the church there is always a need for a kind of order, not perhaps just an authoritative kind of order, but order or procedure by which people can work out problems and do the things they want done."

As I see it, the Session is going to have to take control and insist that any problems involving the spiritual life of the church be brought before them and handled by them. The Session's next meeting is to be one with the Trustees. If they can get the idea in this meeting that the Session is the one who is going to call the numbers and have control, that this will spread to all the other people and they will begin to realize that no one person is dictating to the others."

Mrs. W.: "Well, I think that will be a good thing."

(Comments: By this time I was getting ready to leave. I stood up and she continued talking a little more positively. I considered suggesting that we might close our visit with prayer, but I thought differently about it as I considered the fact that worship did not mean anything to her, that she had not sought grace in order to relieve the situation --add to this that she did not ask for prayer.

This closed the interview.

Conclusion

I told Mrs. Williams that I would be visiting the other people whom I felt were involved, that I would like her to know I would not be commenting on what she had said. She expressed appreciation and said she wanted me to go ahead and visit these people but keep her name out of it as far as what she had to say.

There are some parts of this visit that would make one feel as though Mrs. Williams had been harboring some kind of a system of thinking and possibly she has but it isn't so tightly woven that she is unable to unravel it.

I did not try to follow the Rogerian system of reflection of thoughts or comments expressed by the parishoner but rather followed a more spontaneous approach of permitting this woman to know how I view the situation. I felt that in being more objective myself that I could help her see the impact of this more clearly.

COMMENTARY ON THE VISIT WITH MRS. WILLIAMS
DECEMBER 29, 1962

Perhaps one of the significant portions of this visit comes in the first few words of Mrs. Williams, wherein she confesses ". . . I am at the root of it all . . ." I represented at this point an accepting father authority, which seemed to relieve her of a burden, which burden I was not fully aware.

Near the first of the visit, Mrs. Williams expresses her sense that there is a "solid group" that is in a struggle to have their way rather than to give in to her way. There seems to be resentment in the statements that the respective husbands listen to their wives and that she knows that I think a lot of at least three of these families. One gets the impression that Mrs. Williams is alone and possibly lonely.

To apply the thesis of this paper to her attitude, it would seem almost as though there is a patriarchal jealousy toward some of these people, and the impression is quite apparent to me that she "has a claim" on the members of the church, even though they don't accept the claim.

Earlier in the year, I had sensed that there was something awry in the church and had, specifically, written sermons to apply to the life problems that we face and to the proving of our faith as we are enabled not to avoid difficulties but to deal with them. It was on this basis that I asked Mrs. Williams as to how the church service and prayers helped her. That she could say so forthrightly that they were of no benefit,

at first becomes a depressing bit of knowledge for me as the preacher. However, as one applies again the concepts involved in the thesis of this paper, it becomes quite clear that Mrs. Williams cannot really worship God in terms of the Christian faith. This is to say that for her the Christian message blending the equality of all men with respect and love for all men with the patriarchal elements of law and order has not taken place. To push this further, one could almost say with a fair amount of confidence that this woman is spiritually immature and is, in the ideas of St. Paul, still under the "school master." She has not been able to "crucify the old Adam."

There is one other area that seems to validate the above comments on Mrs. Williams and this is the Good Friday candlelight Communion service which she has had for years at the Paw Paw Church. It has been my impression each Good Friday that I have been at this Church that Mrs. Williams has seen the Good Friday service as her opportunity for self aggrandizement or the seeking of the approval of the Church leaders, inasmuch as there is an obvious absence of any concern for the meaning of Good Friday with its emphasis or "self-sacrifice" (not my will but Thine be done). I have gone away each Good Friday with Mrs. Williams' words ringing in my ears--"This is my favorite hymn," "This is my favorite scripture," "This is my favorite home." A sense of humility and trust in God is clearly absent in her leadership at these services.

To summarize the above once more, Mrs. Williams' faith is close to that of a child performing at the Christmas or Easter exercises.

This has been attested to by two of the church officers and one non-member of the church speaking to me, privately. One of these elder-officers said that Mrs. Williams had told her that there was no point in conducting the Good Friday service unless you got some personal glory out of it. The officers seem to feel that the frankness of Mrs. Williams carried no insight with it.

I find myself sharply aware of a lack on her part of any kind of communion with her fellow-man, i.e., her friends, neighbors and others in the church. Her one reference of support outside herself is not God nor her friends, but only her husband.

According to Carl Jung's philosophy, Mrs. Williams is a woman who has a persona (i.e., a self) which she presents to all people, including herself and believes this to be the real Ruth Williams. While she has undoubtedly been able to exercise a great deal of control in the church, she has experienced resentment not totally veiled by some of the people.

On the other side of this polarity is a sort of patriarchal concern, evidenced in Mrs. Williams. She is a mother in her own right but has been asserting a non-maternal role in her effort to control the Sunday School and its leaders. In a sense, she almost takes the role of Jocasta in being a woman yet denying her maternal principles, and replacing them with patriarchal principles. This must be very

difficult to understand for those who have to deal with her. The confused polarity within Mrs. Williams might create many fringe problems in a group like this.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW WITH RETIRING SUPERINTENDENT, MR. STONE JANUARY 12, 1963--SATURDAY

Following the election of a new Superintendent in December, many things began to occur which were closely or distantly related to the problem-situation on which I was working.

The newly elected Superintendent spoke to me briefly about his desire to discuss the future of the Sunday School and to plan its program for the coming year. No appointment was made to effect this conversation until the first Sunday in January. At this time a meeting of the superintendent and the teachers was tentatively planned.

The schedule was something like this:

January 6th--Sunday--Tentative Teachers Meeting considered. Pastor schedules meeting with the new Superintendent and the retiring Superintendent on Tuesday, January 8th, also a meeting with the 1961 Superintendent on Tuesday, January 8th, also a meeting with the 1961 Superintendent one hour prior to the January 8th meeting.

The meeting at the home of the Sunday School Superintendent for 1961 is noted below.

Mr. Stone and his wife were both visited. We sat at the kitchen table. I had a cup of coffee and cigar during

the visit.

I asked Mr. Stone for his view of the misunderstanding in Sunday School which I understood had begun during the spring of 1962.

Mr. Stone said that Mrs. Williams was this way in everything she was in. "If she doesn't get her way, she gets huffy." "She wants to be IT every time." "She wants to tell others what to do."

He said further that Mrs. Williams had not been happy, he felt, because the Sunday School attendance had been up for the two years he was Superintendent. She had been the superintendent the two previous years and had not experienced a noteworthy attendance.

"Now, I think a lot of Mr. and Mrs. Williams. They get a lot of people attending the church, but she just likes to run things her way."

Mr. Stone said the specific problem was that she felt there ought to be written reports or excuses turned in when the young people were absent while attending a church elsewhere. This written excuse would be credited to their attendance record, enabling them to receive an honor pin for attendance.

She had heard that Monte was running around the countryside and not attending church like he had said he was.

"But," said Mr. Stone, "I felt that I had to keep my word. I had said that written reports were not necessary."

Mr. Stone said later that Monte had asked him if he (the Superintendent) believed him. "I said that if he said

this was so, that was good enough for me. I said I felt that one had to trust others for otherwise, we would get nowhere."

Mr. Stone then added that Monte confessed that he had been running around elsewhere, and had not been attending church.

In this Mr. Stone did not indicate a willingness to give any credit to Mrs. Williams--to say that she had been right, or that he was too gullible or offering too much temptation for the young people. He said nothing to support Mrs. Williams or admit that he was partly in the wrong.

COMMENTARY ON THE VISIT WITH MR. STONE
JANUARY 12, 1963

A brief impression from the visit with Mr. Stone indicates that while he was given a job of authority in the Sunday School, he appreciated his task with a fair amount of blending of the patriarchal elements with those of a matriarchal type. This is to say that his was a job of maintaining law and order in the Sunday School. He was in a position to expect obedience and to require a sort of hierarchy in the responsibilities of the Sunday School. At the same time, however, he was seeking to hold to the principle of equality, fraternity and liberty in his work. This showed up in greeting each Sunday School member equally, in respecting each person rather than choosing a favorite son or discriminating against individuals and he allowed a freedom of choice for Monte, which had the salutary effect of enabling Monte to confess that he had been lying about attending church elsewhere.

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW WITH NEWLY-ELECTED SUPERINTENDENT, MRS. MACK JANUARY 19, 1963

I spoke of the difficulty within the church wherein the misunderstanding came about.

I asked for comments as Mrs. Mack had seen it. She gave essentially the same information I already had.

She had inherited a system and a situation and, for the most part, made the best of it without attempting too much if any change. (This unwillingness to tip the boat suggests rigidity within the community and possibly on the part of Mrs. Mack.)

I commented on my visit with Mrs. Williams to say that I had visited her and that we had discussed the value of seeking the counsel of the church elders (session) in such administrative matters. No personal remarks or views of Mrs. Williams were shared.

I spoke of the need for the superintendent to have a Christian Education Committee to which he could turn for his authority and decisions. Also, I suggested the possibility of the use of by-laws for the Sunday School.

A meeting of the superintendent and teachers including an elder (who is also a teacher) was held in which the action of the Session was accepted, and a Christian Education Committee was formed.

At a meeting of the Session (elders of the Church) the need for a Christian Education Committee was discussed. At this time I spoke of the need to work out our administrative problems in harmony. Also, I spoke of the impropriety of burdening the Sunday School Superintendent with decisions of policy and administration. His decision appears as arbitrary, since he is the only one willing to make them. The burden is not only this, but he gets criticism from those who disagree.

The Session approved the formation of a committee.

COMMENTARY ON THE VISIT WITH MRS. MACK
JANUARY 19, 1963

Mrs. Mack was the Sunday School Superintendent when I first came to the church and had been doing a good job as far as I could see. As she was not a member of the church (she has a Baptist background) she did not want to use too much initiative in her leadership.

The value of this visit was largely that of seeking to respect the parties concerned, so that they would know I was aware of the problems they were facing. Also, they would know that their communication to me was confidential. This, I felt, was building up a reservoir of trust which seemed fairly apparent to me as I moved about.

Generally, any assessment of dynamics resident in Mrs. Mack and family would be that they are withdrawing from responsibility. This uncritical deference to the authority resident in the church-school officers suggests that the ties to their parents have not been clearly resolved. Still the action of Mrs. Mack is understandable inasmuch as they are now members of the Paw Paw Church.

APPENDIX G

AN INCIDENT ON APRIL 21, 1963

On Sunday morning, April 7, an announcement was made that a Stewardship and Promotion Meeting at the Hope Presbyterian Church in Plainfield would be held Sunday afternoon, April 21. I asked for volunteers to attend, and Mr. Williams and Mr. Pullen said they would go with their wives.

Sunday morning, April 21, this announcement was again made and it was noted that these people would be attending. I gave Mr. Pullen the announcement that had been sent to me regarding the meeting.

Monday evening I went with Mr. Williams to a church meeting in Greencastle. On the way, Mr. Williams said: "Well, at least we know we belong to this meeting." I looked at him and asked how he meant this.

Mr. Williams said: "Well we were told we didn't belong at this meeting yesterday afternoon."

Reverend A.--What?

Mr. W.--We were told we didn't belong over there at Plainfield. That was for Hendrick's County.

Rev. A.--Who told you that?

Mr. W.--Rev. Bossel.

Rev. A.--Well how did he happen to say that?

Mr. W.--Well, here's the way it was. We were sitting

there and the minister of that church came over and introduced himself and after we talked a little bit he asked me if we were from Hendrick's County. And I said, "No, we were from Putnam County," and the Reverend said, "Well, this is just for Hendricks County." And I said, "Then we don't belong here." The minister said, "well, I guess you could say it that way, but you can stay as long as you're here." We stayed for about another half hour or so and then before they showed the movie we left.

Rev. A.--I can't understand that. Did you talk with the Chairman of the Meeting?

Mr. W.--No. We didn't talk with anyone else, we figured the minister knew what he was talking about. Actually, the minister talked to me, and I told Mr. Pullen what he had said.

You know, we saw someone else over there who had Brazil, Indiana on his tag, and we also saw someone from St. Andrews Church in Indianapolis.

Rev. A. Well, that sure gets me sore at the minister. I'm pretty sure that was for the West side of Indianapolis, and also the Presbytery doesn't operate by counties. Well, I'm going to have to call Rev. Bossel and find out just what the score is.

Tuesday night I called Mr. Auble, the chairman and checked with him as to the scope of the meeting. It was for the West side of Indianapolis cutting across several counties.

Reverend Bossel was next on my list and our phone conversation went something like this.

Rev. A.--Larry, this is Bob A. I wanted to talk to you about the meeting Sunday afternoon.

Rev. B.--Bob it's good to hear from you. I'm sorry we missed you at the meeting.

Rev. A.--Did you see my people there?

Rev. B.--I talked to them for awhile, but they left early.

Rev. A.--Well, they kind of got the idea that this meeting was just for Hendrick's County.

Rev. B.--I don't know how they would have gotten that idea. Now I went over and talked with them about the Chain of Missions letter I sent you.

Rev. A.--Do you remember pretty much what you said to them?

Rev. B.--Yes, I went over and talked with your Elder and asked him if Rev. A. had mentioned the Chain of Missions Program to the Session. The Elder said that you had announced it that morning at the church service. We talked a little bit about the program of Chain of Missions and I asked him what County they were from and he said, Putnam County. I then told them that they would not be involved in this as it was for Hendrick's County.

At this point it became quite clear what had happened to cause a misunderstanding. Rev. B. apologized profusely although I told him that this was not his fault. I apologized to Rev. B., telling him that I was getting pretty sore at him up until this time and with this clarification we said good-bye.

CRITICISM OF MY HANDLING OF THIS VISIT

In looking over the visit in retrospect, I see myself accepting the story of the other person as a "Whole Cloth." This is to say, that there is a need on my part to respond only to the feelings of the other person not giving myself time to verify the accuracy of his story or experience.

There is another thought here, and that is that Mr. Williams may unconsciously recognize the fabrication or inaccuracy of his interpretation. If I accept this inaccuracy in my conversation with him it is possible that he would recognize my error of assumption, and thus be able to rest comfortably in the assurance that I was blind to his deeper motivations.

EVALUATION OF MR. WILLIAMS' CONVERSATION

In considering Mr. Williams' readiness to misunderstand it will be helpful to note two things. First of all, in the early part of the parish dilemma it was noted that Mr. Williams had assumed that during a Sunday School meeting the young people had laughed at his wife. On this foundation then he and his wife quit attending Sunday School. A second observation is this, in a conversation with Mr. Williams at a Session Meeting he told me and the other elders how his father had slapped him across the face when he was a young man (about 17 or 18) because, his father said, he had addressed one of the other farmers who was older than Mr. Williams by his first name rather than by his surname.

Mr. Williams said that he never forgot it. It is my feeling that Mr. Williams has never gotten over it and that when anyone in authority speaks to him he expects to be hurt.

It would seem that Mr. Williams' readiness to be rejected by authority has generalized in that even when his wife speaks and others laugh he assumes insult and rejection and so cannot tolerate this.

An uncomfortable thought is this: here is an officer who readily accepts an assignment, even volunteering for it, and before the assignment has been completed he walks out saying "The other person said, we don't belong here." This is uncomfortable in that Mr. Williams does not credit his Pastor with having steered him correctly regarding the meeting. He readily accepts the authority of the Host Pastor, but does not seek to verify with the Host Pastor or chairman of the meeting his own interpretation.

I find myself asking, does Mr. Williams respond with a "yes" to a request when he really means "no"?

It seems to me that it is necessary at this point to converse with Mr. Williams in order to verify the above evaluation. This would have to be done in such a way as to recognize the possible spectre of authority which he has apparently invested in our relationship.

APPENDIX H

THE MYTH OF OEDIPUS REX (Sigmund Freud)

I am referring to the legend of King Oedipus and the Oedipus Rex of Sophocles. Oedipus, the son of Laius, king of Thebes, and Jocasta, the Queen, is exposed as a suckling, because an oracle had informed the father that his son, who was still unborn, would be his murderer. He is rescued and grows up as a king's son at a foreign court until, being uncertain of his origin, he, too, consults the oracle and is warned to avoid his native place, for he is destined to become the murderer of his father and the husband of his mother. On the road leading away from his supposed home he meets King Laius and in a sudden quarrel strikes him dead. He comes to Thebes where he solves a riddle of the Sphinx, who is barring the way to the city, whereupon he is elected king by the grateful Thebans and is rewarded with the hand of Jocasta. He reigns for many years in peace and honour and begets two sons and two daughters upon his unknown mother, until at last a plague breaks out which causes the Thebans to consult the oracle anew. Here Sophocles' tragedy begins. The messengers bring the reply that the plague will stop as soon as the murderer of Laius is driven from the country. But where is he? "Where shall he be found, Faint, and hard to be known, the trace of the ancient guilt?"

The action of the play consists simply in the disclosure, approached step by step and artistically delayed (and comparable to the work of a psychoanalyst) that Oedipus himself is the murderer of Laius, and that he is the son of the murdered man and Jocasta. Shocked by the abominable crime which he has unwittingly committed, Oedipus blinds himself, and departs from his native city. The prophecy of the oracle has been fulfilled.

In the very text of Sophocles' tragedy there is an unmistakable reference to the fact that the Oedipus legend had its source in dream-material of immemorial antiquity, the content of which was the painful disturbance of the child's relations to its parents caused by the first impulses of sexuality. Jocasta comforts Oedipus--who is not yet enlightened, but is troubled by the recollection of the oracle--by

an allusion to a dream which is often dreamed though it cannot, in her opinion, mean anything:--

"For many a man hath seen himself in dreams
His mother's mate, but he who gives no heed
To suchlike matters bears the easier life."

(Interpretation of Dreams,
Trans. A. A. Brill, pp. 160-162)

APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM ANDERSON AND FAMILY JANUARY 18, 1964 (SATURDAY)

This was a fairly warm sunny day. It was about 2:00 P.M. when I stopped by the farm home. Mr. Anderson was working on his tractor and a neighbor was assisting. Mrs. Anderson answered the door. A teen-age daughter was present.

After some brief remarks and pleasantries, I inquired about their not attending church for some time. (This was over a year and a half).

Mrs. Anderson was somewhat surprised that I inquired but it wasn't too shocking and before I knew it, she was pouring over a great many of her feelings about the church, its meaning to them and the church members and how much these meant to them.

Mrs. Anderson spoke feelingly and with some elements akin to nostalgia and grief over their absenting themselves from the church for these many months. She spoke freely in her daughter's presence and my reaction was that the parents shared their feelings and Christian philosophy with their children.

"The Paw Paw Church means a great deal to us. We had visited at other churches nearby, but we liked the people

here and we enjoyed being able to worship at their church. But you know they had some disagreements and we were being asked to take sides. Well, we just liked people on both sides. So rather than try to take any sides we just stopped going there."

Pastor: I'm not clear on how you mean it--"they wanted you to take sides." Mrs. Anderson continued: "Some would come up to us and tell us how they felt, and how the others felt who disagreed with them. We listened and then later, the others would come and tell us their side of the story. We felt then that the others were looking at us as though we were now siding against them. It was just too much."

Names were not mentioned, however, it was fairly clear that this involved the Sunday School leadership, the Superintendent and one of the very dominant women teachers and it was in part over the use of attendance pins.

Later this afternoon Mr. Anderson came in and told essentially the same account. His attitude and feelings were identical with those of his wife. He made this one statement: "There hasn't been one Sunday pass that we haven't talked about the Paw Paw Church." Mr. Anderson concluded by saying: "Well, I know we should be going to church especially for the children. I'll tell you what, Rev., we'll come back for your sake."

I didn't really want this motivation. I spoke then of what I felt a church ought to be for its people.

Pastor: "If I were a member in the church, I'd want my children to go, so that when problems or decisions come

up I could say to them, 'This is why we go to church!.' We learn how we can live together as Christians and how Christians solve their problems and disagreements.

As I prepared to leave, I mentioned that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper would be observed this Sunday and that the following Sunday was the Annual Meeting.

The Anderson family did not attend either of these two weeks.

COMMENTARY ON THE VISIT WITH MR. ANDERSON
JANUARY 18, 1964

Mr. Anderson is in the trucking business and is continually wrestling with management-employee Union problems. As I talked with Mr. Anderson and his wife, it became apparent that he was looking for that "beloved community" and not to be poetic or facetious, but he was truly looking for that "City not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." It is my feeling that he has a legitimate goal here and it was clear that he didn't find the "beloved community" that he looked for. However, it is apparent that his own concept of the church and of faith is quite unrealistic.

Mr. Anderson was and is still looking for the church as a "beloved community," though on his terms. He cannot see this as a spiritual struggle within the lives of people facing every day problems. In a sense, it would appear that his faith is that expressed by the church fifty or so years ago, in which one is expected to deny this life and anticipate the bliss of the next life.

The faith of Mr. Anderson and his family has to be judged as static, unfruitful and infantile. A childlike faith as espoused by Jesus could be expected to embrace the elements of trust and of initiative and curiosity, and these seem to be lacking in the faith expressed by the Anderson family. There is no trust that with God's help, problems can be resolved. At this point there is only flight from problems. There is no initiative or curiosity which would enable the Anderson family to take courage and face the difficulties

and grow in their own faith with a healthy curiosity that would transcend their childlike acceptance of what church authorities have told us or taught them in their earlier years.

In summary, human goals do not seem to fit in with his church relationship. He separates his church from the reality of people and their foibles. This may suggest that Mr. Anderson does not live with himself too easily since his work is definitely mundane. It would be my guess that he uses his church life as a split-off or dichotomy apart from his daily life. It is not a satisfactory solution and his frustration impels him to attend another church (for his children's sake, i.e. they know some of the young people in the other church).

Divine goals, in the light of the above thoughts, are likely to be unrealistic, a seeking for a maternal-giving and sheltering group that demands no obedience or duty.

APPENDIX K

A LETTER FROM MRS. WILLIAMS
AUGUST 26, 1964

Mr. Alexander,

Tom and I suddenly decided to take a trip West and here we are. But I have given considerable thought to your last Session meeting or at least the part I heard. And there are a few things I should like to add to the part of Aid Sec. report I read to you and to which you would say nothing.

The Aid had long talked the chilli supper for building fund money, but Mrs. Shedd preferred one group to take charge of it. Lucy offered herself and class to do this and at no time was it suggested that the money was to be theirs nor do I feel that you and Mr. Stone and Mrs. South have the right to say anything about it. It was not to be S. S. money. Never mentioned.

Lucy did stand up in S. S. and when asked if the money was to go to the building fund, she acknowledged that it was. You, yourself, should have heard that. Others did.

As for putting the money in Ray's hand to gather interest, everyone knows he has kept for some time the building fund in a checking account.

When Tom suggested putting the remainder of building

fund money on to our debt you all three sat like bumps on a log nor did you agree. Why didn't you? Wasn't his suggestion as good as Mr. Stone's that Lucy have charge of money that was not hers?

Also when Mr. Stone brought up S. S. class changes, you jumped right in and agreed with the statement "since Mr. Stone had been appointed Superintendent he could go right ahead." I might remind you--you have always said the Session was over the S. S. but you gave Tom no chance to say anything--of course you know he disagreed with what Mr. Stone wants to do and that shut off discussion.

I would like to suggest you go talk to E. Shedd, E. Mills, C. Eberts and P. Ewing about remainder of chili supper money, they are the ones concerned not you nor Mr. Stone. I can imagine even Lucy knows the truth.

Now that I have this out of my system, perhaps I can enjoy the rest of my trip. But please remember if you stick by what you did Session nite--you are starting a new precedent that can sure hurt the Aid and what little church you have.

Ruth Williams

COMMENTARY ON A LETTER FROM MRS. WILLIAMS
AUGUST 26, 1964

This letter is in part a sort of confession for Mrs. Williams. This is apparent in both the first and last paragraphs.

At our last session meeting, Mrs. Williams listened in without our knowing that she was listening in. Later, after the meeting was over and we were having coffee, she began to comment on the concerns of the meeting which are noted in this letter. A cursory glance at the letter makes it apparent that Mrs. Williams is concerned again with law and order. It is apparent in the letter and was apparent at the meeting that for her the matters of fraternity and liberty are unimportant. This is to say that while the other people in the church were able to transcend the strict interpretation of parliamentary law in order to arrive at an agreeable solution to the use of the monies, Mrs. Williams and her husband were unable to concern themselves with the happier solution, seeing it as a nebulous kind of order rather than a clear conformity to parliamentary procedure.

The Chili Supper sponsored by Lucy's class was a family affair typical of other decisions and planning. No records were kept and no decisions were written. There was simply a bull-dogged determination to have this Supper to raise money for the Building Fund. The class was to indicate where they wanted it spent, but it still all went into the same pot. The Session and I felt it was not incumbent upon us to tamper with it, and we didn't.

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